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FORMER Marconi star Matthew Bingley has moved to the north shore – signing with first season Ericsson Cup club Northern Spirit.

Bingley is believed to have landed a contract which will

make him amongst the best paid players in Australia – the other three are all at Spirit as well..

He had spent time at Bossley Park training but decided instead to join Spirit.



JASON Culina is expected to decide this week just where his immediate future lies.

He already has a big money offer on the table from Danish club Brondby and another is expected this week

from elsewhere in Europe. The talented midfielder will be a loss to Olympic if he goes – but the transfer is expected to reap at least \$1.5million.

Watch out for Parma

MATT HAS SIGNED

JASON IS GOING

BOMBER BLASTS

By BRUCE CAMPBELL

THE WAR of words, which is about to precede some serious action, is hotting up in troubled old Adelaide town.

Following on his mid-season sacking deposed Sharks coach Manfred Schaefer has hit back at the club's majority stakeholder, Con Makris.

The blast from the player once known as The Bomber for his no-nonsense style of football comes at a time when the 49% shareholders in the Ericsson Cup club are considering how they can themselves turn the tables on the volatile businessman and depose Makris.

And it would come as no great surprise if Schaefer, set this week to return to Sydney, was not re-installed to the coach-

ing position.

Stand-in coach Adrian Santrac has been boo-ed by the clubs' own fans and should Makris be forced to step aside then Santrac will almost certainly follow him.

Schaefer spoke exclusively to *Inside Soccer* about his troubles at the club and catalogued a series of financial irregularities which included:

phone disconnection for non-payment of his bill, threats from Telecom to dis-connect the service this week, similar threats from the local electricity authority and non-payment of his accommodation rent for the last ten weeks.

"Makris has rubbed up the SASF the wrong way, there is no doubt about that," said Schaefer.

"They gave him until last Friday but he said that he wouldn't pay.

"Yet he has gone on radio and denied it all – he is just one big liar.

"The man spends time telling everybody just how rich he is – so why doesn't he pay his bills?"

And Schaefer, who has

chosen a media platform to go public with the problems which may yet sink Adelaide Sharks, has also revealed that the players have not been paid for the last four weeks.

"I am in the same boat as the players," he hit out.

"None of us have been paid for four weeks.

"Makris just doesn't pay his bills – he is a joke."

"I've kept quiet for the last two weeks but I am fed up with the lies, it is time to say something."

Despite all of the financial problems Schaefer still feels a strong loyalty to the club and in

particular Theo Parisos and Sam Petas who lead the 49% shareholding.

"If it wasn't for Theo I wouldn't be still here," he says.

"Theo is great and the rest of the club have been absolutely brilliant.

"I have a lot of friends here and I don't want to leave them in the lurch.

"But Makris didn't even have the guts to tell me face to face I was sacked – he sent somebody else to do his dirty work.

"And he still hasn't told me."

Last week the club's car-park was closed because of unpaid debts although Parisos paid

the entrance for players and VIPs out of his own pocket to avoid further embarrassment for the club.

And now it seems that the minority stakeholders may force Makris out of the club.

As *Inside Soccer* went to print a series of meetings were being held in the South Australian capital to determine how they could legally eject the controversial owner.

But it may be a move which has come too late for a club which has struggled in recent seasons to fulfil its huge potential.

In other Adelaide Ericsson Cup news, stories of a News Ltd. push for an NSL franchise continue to grow in sub-

stance.

But the Rupert Murdoch backed bid is insisting that only one team plays out of Adelaide.

"If a non-aligned team played out of Hindmarsh Stadium with no opposition the potential could be enormous," *Inside Soccer* was told by a source.

"There would obviously be resistance from both City and Sharks to amalgamate but maybe in Adelaide Sharks present predicament that resistance may not be so strong."

The Australian Soccer Federation is closely monitoring the financial problems which have crippled Adelaide Sharks and which may yet signal their demise.

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* CONDITIONS APPLY

Regional club challenges Australia for soccer's future

By Tony Moffitt

THE ailing Bill Turner Cup schools soccer tournament may have been thrown a lifeline thanks to the practical purpose of one woman, and the far-sightedness of one soccer club.

O.K., at this stage, it's not a lifeline - it's the equivalent of a piece of rope; a concept.

But it's a concept, if supported, that could provide the crucial funds needed to see the school-age competition continue well into the new millennium.

Credit for the idea goes to Robyn Riley, manager of the Warilla High School's Bill Turner Cup team.

As fortune has it, Robyn is also the Secretary of the Shellharbour City Soccer Club in the New South Wales Illawarra region.

Robyn is one of those teachers who cares about her kids. She's passionate about her soccer, and she appreciates the value of the Bill Turner Cup, both to her students at Warilla High, and as a breeding ground for future stars of the game.

Last week, in her capacity as Secretary, she took the problem of the potential demise of the Bill Turner Cup to her committee at Shellharbour City.

At that meeting, the folks at Shellharbour City passed what may well become a watershed motion.

The club offered to pay the entry fees of the four local high schools in the club's drawing area.

The club also passed a motion to endeavour to support the competition by supplying assistance to the schools in the form of personnel for coaching or refereeing wherever possible.

The good news was sent by fax to founder of the competition, Bill Turner, who was overwhelmed by both the gesture, and the potential of the offer.

The Bill Turner Cup is entering its twenty first year.

The previous two decades of soccer have created hundreds of quality footballers who learned the game, and the skills at the school level.

The competition is a national footballing treas-

ure and last year the school competition broke a world record when 738 schools entered.

This year, with the demise of the competition's high-profiled sponsor, and no replacements on the horizon, organisers were forced to ask schools to pay a \$20 entry fee.

Letters were sent by the Executive to all current schools from Shepparton to Cairns.

The options were simple; donate or die. In reality, the fee is a pittance, and provides nothing more than the skeleton frame-work for the competition to continue.

The small fee covers administration costs, handbooks, medals and the like. All workers are volunteers.

As a result of that letter, more than 500 schools wrote back with a simple message: "We can't afford to lose the Bill Turner Cup!"

The competition does enjoy the support of some soccer and community groups. The Northern New South Wales Soccer Federation has given financial assistance since Stefan Kamaz's reign in

1979. The Queensland Soccer Federation currently lends financial assistance as does Soccer Canberra.

The Newcastle Breakers have also generously donated the use of Breakers Stadium for playing the finals. Last year, the Northern NSW Referees also offered a donation.

On the business front, there are some loyal, generous supporters; businesses like Longworth and Goodwin Printers, Lake Macquarie Council, Stuart & Dunn, Auscraft Medals and Ithaca Cold Storage.

But it's the idea of Robyn Riley's that has re-energised the founder of the competition.

"What a marvellous gesture, and what a wonderful idea," Bill Turner told *Inside Soccer* when the fax from Shellharbour City landed on his desk.

It is a wonderful idea. More importantly, it's an idea that has potential, provided the soccer clubs around the country can see past the current season and into the future of Australian soccer.

"This is a challenge," Mr Turner enthused.

"Shellharbour City have laid down a challenge to other clubs right around Australia, and, in the long term, it's a challenge for the people who make up the committees of those clubs.

"If we could get all of our senior football clubs, whether they be playing National Soccer League, or the local 2nd Division competition, to pitch in and donate funds to cover the costs of other schools, this competition wouldn't be on its knees."

Bill Turner speaks from his heart. He's a gentleman.

34 years as a school teacher, tutoring the likes of soccer-star Craig Johnston, and a wealth of experience as a referee, blowing the whistle on legends like Ray Baartz and Col Curran have given the man whose name is on the trophy a lifetime of sporting and school experience.

He's passionate about soccer; even more passionate about school-age soccer and the absolute necessity for the competition to continue.

For Bill Turner it's a mission; a way of paying back a sport that has

given him so much.

"Before we entered this year we had to decide whether to pull the plug on the whole thing and let it die, or to keep struggling, on a shoe-string," Mr Turner explained.

"In the end, we decided that it was just too important to our soccer future to let it die. But that doesn't make the current struggle any easier."

Shellharbour City Soccer Club aren't in the same league as Manchester United, nor for that matter, Marconi or South Melbourne.

They don't have the budget, the crowds, the stadium, nor footballers so talented they only need one name, like Madonna.

They're essentially a group of community minded people who share a love of the game, and a desire to see it continue to grow at the formative level within our school system.

The Club's gesture of support for the Bill Turner Cup, and directly for their own children, is a shining example of how a small, but significant contribution, if duplicated by other clubs

across the nation, can resurrect the competition, and put it back on a level footing.

One club isn't enough. One club is a start.

The responsibility now falls to other clubs to follow Shellharbour City's lead.

According to Mr Turner, the competition remains worthwhile and increasingly important.

"It's not unusual to be watching a Cup game, and you're standing shoulder-to-shoulder with representatives from some of the senior clubs," he admitted.

"They come to the games because they realise it is a showcase of what raw talent is available.

"It's an opportunity for the clubs, and the kids, to take their soccer to the next level."

And so now the future of the competition, and the future of our sport has been thrust back into the wide-open hands of our soccer clubs right around the country - at all levels.

Bill Turner and Robyn Riley have a plea.

"Don't drop the ball. Do give a damn. Do something about it."

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Interest builds in next season's Ericsson Cup membership

By Paul Millar

CASHED-up financiers are queuing up to introduce teams into the national soccer league after the stunning success of Northern Spirit this season.

The Spirit have drawn bumper crowds to every home game at North Sydney Oval in their first season in the national Ericsson Cup competition following in the footsteps of Perth Glory.

League general manager Stefan Kamasz said two separate Sydney consortia had applied to join the competition, one next year and one the following season.

Both teams want to play out of the Sydney Football Stadium and Soccer Australia is trying to convince the parties to pool their resources and make one application.

"It would make sense to get the two parties together on this one," Kar-

masz said.

"They've seen the potential through what has happened with Northern Spirit and they want to be a part of it," he said.

The Parramatta Leagues Club is also interested in joining the league which will undergo a major overhaul next season.

There is speculation that the current 15 team league will be trimmed to a 14 side competition with up to four clubs battling to escape the chop.

The Auckland Kings have put the pressure on the league strugglers by meeting the strict criteria set down by Soccer Australia for inclusion in the league.

Soccer Australia sent final legal documents to the New Zealand consortium last week.

Part of the deal is believed to be a \$1million payment and an agreement to underwrite travel costs to New Zealand.

Inside Soccer's TRIVIA MOMENTS Sponsored by SOCCERLINE

ANTE MILICIC and PETER ZOIS both play at which Dutch First Division club?

ANSWER: see Ram Scoreboard, p30.



Mark Viduka: his transfer holds the key to Melbourne Knights future

land.

The deal is so advanced that only a huge outcry from the Australian clubs would place the deal in jeopardy.

It has been argued that the Kings team will become the New Zealand national side and that Australia will be helping to strengthen its closest rival.

Sydney United will make the play-offs but their future in the league is hanging by a thread.

Backers have rallied to ensure the second placed side sees out the season but cash-shy United appears to be on borrowed time.

Gippsland Falcons are

also under a financial cloud and their predicament is worse as they are third bottom on the league ladder.

The Canberra Cosmos have endured a nightmare season and will run away with the wooden spoon - the only hope they have of survival is that they play in the national capital.

Many believe it would not be a national league without a team in Canberra.

Once a powerhouse in Australian soccer, the Melbourne Knights have sunk to unfamiliar territory this season.

Second bottom and with large debts, the club is sweating on a slice of

Mark Viduka's transfer to Celtic which should net the Knights \$1.58 million and give them a life-line to play on next season.

Carlton will probably be sold to a squad of Melbourne businessmen before the end of this month and the club will move from Optus to Olympic Park next season.

The consortium, led by high profile AFL-player manager Peter Jess, needs to come up with \$500,000 to play in the league next season as it will be regarded as a new side.

The admission fee is likely to cost \$250,000 in hard cash and the rest in a bank guarantee.

A White Elephant at Sydney Football Stadium

SOCER Australia has been approached by two parties exploring the possibility of basing a new national league team at the Sydney Football Stadium.

Ericsson Cup general manager Stefan Kamasz told *Inside Soccer* that he had been informally approached by two individuals who were interested in submitting a proposal to play out of the arena as early as next season.

"I think it would be fantastic to have a side playing out of this particular stadium," said Kamasz.

"Provided it was an organisation that was looking after the eastern

Comment by Derek Royal

suburbs, central Sydney and the inner south, if that's what you want to call it, then it would make a lot of sense to me."

Northern Spirit's success in generating huge crowds and appealing to a wide support base appears to be the inspiration behind establishing a new team at the SFS.

But the size of the SFS could pose a problem for any team based there.

In recent years rugby league teams Sydney City and South Sydney have failed dismally in attracting crowds of more than 10,000 to their home

games at the ground.

In fact, the Rabbitohs considered half that number a decent turn-out.

The NSW Waratahs rugby union side attracted average crowds of more than 20,000 during last year's Super 12 competition and while that's admirable, 20,000 seats still remained empty.

In fact, the only time the SFS can safely predict a full-house is for State of Origin rugby

league, the NRL grand final and the Bledisloe Cup rugby union clash between Australia and New Zealand.

Now, each of those



Australia v England at the Sydney Football Stadium: one of the few times that the world game has filled the stadium rated by many as a White Elephant

Blatter Defends In Gulf

FIFA president Joseph Blatter has defended his plan for a soccer World Cup every two years and denied it would mean more money for his world governing body.

Blatter, whose plan met with mixed reactions when he first revealed it last month, said he would present the details of his plan to the FIFA executive at a meeting on March 11 and 12. He argued his plan would underline the importance of national teams as opposed to the world's top clubs. But he added: "FIFA earnings are higher when the World Cup is organised every four years as opposed to two."

Blatter was speaking in Oman at a tri-nations tournament involving Oman, Switzerland and Slovakia. Last month European football's governing body UEFA said the plan would devalue the World Cup.

Soccer's Hall of Fame set for February launch

AT A meeting of Soccer Australia Commissioners on June 2, 1996, it was agreed in principle to form an independent committee to acknowledge and honour outstanding services to soccer in Australia.

It was determined that a system of Awards should be created at three distinct levels, with separate but equivalent groups for both 'on the field' and 'off the field' contributions.

On Sunday, February 28, 1999 following the Annual General Meeting, Soccer Australia will officially recognise the first set of inductees into Australian Soccer's Hall of Fame, with categories as follows:

1. Hall of Champions (players)/ Hall of Honour

(contributors)

2. Medal of Excellence (players)/ Roll of Honour (contributors)
3. Award of Distinction (players)/ Roll of Honour (contributors)

The inductees, both male and female, are drawn from various areas throughout soccer, including Players, Officials, Coaches, Referees and the Media.

Believed to be on the list of first-up inductees are a number of prominent figures involved in the world of soccer including the entire 1974 Australian World Cup team.

"If that happens it would be the greatest single recognition ever given to the team," one former player told *Inside Soccer*.

"We have been shoved aside and ignored until recently although the drive past at the Iran (World Cup eliminator) game in 1987 was a great gesture.

"Other than that the only major recognition came at a reunion which was promoted by Port Kembla Soccer Club.

"This is long overdue but it will be a great honour. It will also go a long way to killing off some bad feeling."

Other rumoured inductees include Sepp Blatter and Oceania president, Charlie Dempsey.

Inductees will include journalists, administrators and former players at the special presentation which will be held at Sydney's downtown Wentworth Hotel.

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Keys to the city



SYDNEY



Inside Soccer PAGE 3

Bruce Campbell

IT'S ONLY AN OPINION

AUSTRALIAN Soccer, or football, or association football – call it what you will, is going through an immense growth period.

I am not quite sure of the exact reason but I feel fairly confident that the promotion of the World Cup second leg eliminator against Iran, regardless of the result, has been a major factor if not the out and out catalyst.

Looking out of our office back window at Corrimal onto Memorial Park, I am constantly reminded of that progress.

In the mid-1950s Corrimal Rangers were the best football team in Australia.

They had the Australian captain, several internationals and a multitude of state and district reps in their team.

In short it was a team of stars.

I have to thank my friend Nev Arrowsmith for reminding me of this also because he recently gave me a copy of the history of the Rangers, a club which has now amalgamated into Illawarra Premier League side Northern United.

It is easy to look across at the junior field beside the main ground and think it is just a kid's park and it is also just as easy to look at the Rangers ground and see that as nothing more than a local-side ground.

Both would be a mistake.

Memorial Park was state-of-the-art in its day.

It was a fully enclosed ground with its own canteen, facilities and seating, as well as undercover protection, which would have been the envy of most clubs in Australia.

The talent on display was immense and for the big games crowds of 5,000 would pack the little stadium.

That was soccer in the pre-Federation days when the Rangers were an integral part of the domestic scene.

Even into the early and late '60s their set-up would be the envy of many, and, right up until the start of the NSL, there were clubs at the highest level in Australia who did not possess that level of facility.

But not any longer, and that is the true testament of the growth of our game.

Facilities at the vast majority of NSL grounds today are incomparable with even just five or ten years ago.

In truth, the league is almost unrecognisable.

Evidence of that is the fact that clubs are seriously prepared to deposit a \$500,000 franchise fee/guarantee to be part of Australia's elite set-up.

Yet when I suggested this to David Hill just a few years ago he scoffed at the very suggestion of a franchise fee.

Had that been done then at least the

games would have been a half mile better off when Collingwood bit the dust.

That aside, football is in really good shape.

Sometimes we forget that when we are over critical about certain factors of unrest within our ranks.

Sure, improvements can be made, improvements will be made – and there is no cause for complacency.

Maybe I am just lucky that I can daily look out on a constant reminder of just how far we have come.

Could a little club like Corrimal Rangers cut it in today's league?

Maybe not, but imagine what it would have been like if they had built upon their success, added to their stadium, continued to bring in the best players available.

Sadly, the game was ripped apart by the internece fighting between clubs at the end of the '50s.

The resultant breakaway NSWSF have done a great deal to advance the cause of the game but along the way Corrimal Rangers were a casualty.

They managed to bounce back in some form before admitting it was all too tough and combined with other local clubs to present the Illawarra with top class football in the shape of South Coast United.

But I suspect that a lot of heart was gone.

Could you ever see little clubs like that rise to the top again?

It is almost beyond any form of imagination.

That, however, is what is great about our game.

Bring back promotion and relegation and even the tiniest of minnows can dream.

Recreate a national knockout cup, a story which we 'scooped' some weeks ago, and then everybody can have a dream.

Nev's terrific memories aren't a dream – but they are proof of the great advances our game has made in just over a quarter of a century.

I'D LIKE to publicly thank the many, many calls we get from our readers.

Both our editorial and marketing staff have received literally scores of calls in the last fortnight from all parts of the country.

In fact we created a wee record of our own last Wednesday when four separate calls were received from Perth in one day – two from news-agencies to let us know that their regular supply of copies had sold out on day one. Maybe it was that front page story.

You keep the comments coming and we will do our best to keep up with your wishes and expectations.

Real Progress
AS A NEW reader to Inside Soccer, I felt compelled to air some views.

Although the 'potential' of soccer has been touted for many years I feel that in order for real progress to be made within the code some real tough decisions have to occur within the foreseeable future.

The real problem lies with the fact that clubs who have marginalised their supporters by appealing to a particular segmented part of the community are finding themselves slowly ostracised by the very people they were excluding.

The Northern Spirit and Perth Glory are by far the most popular clubs in terms of crowd attendances.

The simple reason lies with the fact that they are supported by an excellent marketing department and have appealed to the general community.

The question which remains is this; how does Soccer Australia go about telling those same clubs who built soccer in this country that "thanks we'll kick you out now and take it from here?"

It won't happen and if it does you don't have to be a genius to realise the potential ramifications.

I also believe that a team known as Melbourne United should emerge from Victoria

replacing some of the weaker clubs already there and Marconi, despite its rich tradition, should change its name to reflect soccer in the 21st century.

Finally I believe that until soccer is given free to air coverage the growth of the game will be stifled.

Chris Liberiou
E-mail
(I couldn't help but agree with the general sentiment expressed, Chris.)

I also assume that by free-to-air you mean commercial coverage.

Maybe I am all alone here but I think that the commercials do a lousy job of every other sport they touch and am definitely not deliriously

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awaiting their 'arrival'. However it will come.

Now I will be supporting Northern Spirit as a

Big Mitch for Socceroos

THERE has been a great deal of speculation in the media recently about who to select for the Socceroos coaching position vacated by Terry Venables.

Names such as Hodgson, Thomson and even Alex Ferguson (believe it or not from one soccer journo in Sydney) have been bandied about. There is no way we can afford an overseas coach the calibre of those mentioned, and even if we could, there is no guarantee of World Cup qualification success.

For mine, the answer to our Socceroos coach position is in Australia. We have a wealth of experience in coaches like Branko Culina, Zoran Matic and co., and some exciting new coaching talent making an impact on the local scene in Farina, Angie P, Arnold, Krnecic and Kosmina.

I am firmly of the opinion, that our next Socceroos coach should be David Mitchell. Big Mitch has the respect of his peers and senior players; in depth knowledge of the international scene and contacts, and has demonstrated his coaching ability at Sydney United under extremely difficult circumstances.

Don't bring Thommo back, although I like Thommo, he plays too defensively, plays players out of position, and is not the type of coach to build on what Terry Venables' achievements.

Remember the Olyroo debacle against Spain at the Atlanta Olympics? Talk about ripe for the picking!

We need to go forward, and it's time to install one of our own at the helm. Without doubt, David Mitchell is the man for the job.

Harry Ross
Bankstown NSW

result of this.

With the raising of ticket prices, the team not going too well and the poor crowds on top of this they have to change something.

If they do not they will lose a lot more loyal supporters like myself.

Luke Bear
Camden NSW

(Watch out for a future edition of Inside Soccer when we put the hard questions to Wolves chairman Doug Symes. – Ed.)

United's Struggle
ONE can admire the val-

iant struggle being waged by the supporters of Sydney United to keep the club alive. Whether they survive is debatable.

Over the years there have been numerous Sydney soccer clubs who achieved some prominence for a period only to ultimately fold or at best survive as a minor club or merged with another.

Sydney United could well be the only case where an endangered club is making a concerted effort to survive.

If they do defy the odds and survive as a force in Oz soccer it will only be because they have a solid body of passionate supporters who really care.

Off the top of my head I compiled a list of prominent now-deceased Sydney clubs and those who survive but only as pit players; Pyrmont, Metters, Leichhardt Annandale, Canterbury Bankstown, Granville Auburn, Yugal, Polonia, Prague, Sydney Australia, Western Suburbs, Hakoah, APIA, Budapest St George, Melita Eagles and others I've forgotten.

The common link between all the above clubs is that in the end not enough people cared enough thus their fate was sealed.

Robert Mellor
Bondi NSW

(The one certainty is that time and tide wait for no man – not even in soccer. I'm sure that there are other casualties on the way.)

Remember that 38 clubs have played in the NSL to date – and now there are only 15 left. – Ed.)

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38 CLUBS in NSL history and still counting

As SA officials contemplate the make-up of the new millennium look and feel for the NSL the contenders keep coming.

Trans Tasman rivals the Auckland Kings are booking air fares.

The Parramatta syndicate will spend a full day in late February searching for a catchy name and theme for entry approval.

A single unified Adelaide contingent is taking shape.

SO, *Inside Soccer* readers, it's time to tell *Wheatley's World* which clubs have come and gone over the 24 years NSL history.

Remember that name changes (eg. West Adelaide to Adelaide Sharks, Canberra City to Canberra Arrows etc) will be regarded as a single entrant.

To get you started: Mooroolbark, Sunshine George Cross, Blacktown City

WHERE are they now?

Former 300 NSL match veteran Gerry Gomez still spends considerable time on the park.

By day GEZ (his new business trading name) is a respected supplier of all sporting uniforms specialising in transfer printing.

In his 'spare time' he runs a coaching school in the eastern suburbs of Sydney.

Regular Monday night sessions starting at 4pm during daylight savings at Lyne Park correspond with term 1.

These blocks of coaching continue throughout the season together with school holiday courses from early April.

DOLPHINS coach and Peninsula barber look to shape soccer promo-

WHEATLEY'S WORLD



Thanks for the memories: Gerry Gomez in action with Marconi

tion; Warringah Dolphins head coach Tony Pezzano and Manly's knowledgeable hair guru Rocky Catalino have joined forces to heighten awareness of soccer on the Northern beaches.

A local Premier League select side will take on the Dolphins at Cromer park on 6 March at Cromer Park.

Squad selection for the Premier League eleven will be the responsibility of Rocky and Kenny Mallam.

Training has already commenced at Graham's Reserve with Manly rugby league trainer Duncan Kerr putting the locals through some strenuous sessions.

Remembering that Danny Town-

send was recently a peninsula bred talent, Pezzano and his supporters are on the right track.

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Viduka: Celtic playing career still on

By Ken Gaunt
& Trevor Marshallsea

MARK Viduka, Glasgow Celtic's controversial Australian striker was touted as a candidate for the Tennents Scottish Cup fourth-round game against Dunfermline last Saturday after beginning training with the first-team squad.

But Viduka made himself unavailable for selection saying: "I think this match has come a bit too soon for me. It would be pushing it."

In a rare interview, the former Croatia Zagreb star said he is making good progress on the fitness front after returning to Parkhead.

"I am coming along good and feeling a lot better," he told the official Celtic Hotline.

"I have started training with the first-team squad and getting a feel of the

ball again.

"It is always hard when you have to train by yourself.

"You are running around with not much ball work.

"I feel I have gotten over the worst, but it is up to the coach if he plays me in the under-21s.

"I certainly need match fitness because I haven't played for such a long time."

Viduka knows he is not guaranteed a place in the side because Celtic are scoring goals for fun at the moment.

He added: "I have seen the last three games, and the team have been unbelievable.

"I will have to work really hard and hopefully get a game."

Meanwhile, FIFA have stepped into the row between Celtic and Croatia Zagreb over Viduka's



transfer fee.

The Croatian club are furious that the Scottish champions forwarded only £900,000 for the striker when they fully expected the full £3million that was agreed at the time of the transfer.

Instead Celtic said they would split the remaining £2.1 million with Viduka's previous club, Melbourne Knights, and the player.

Zagreb, already furious about the delay in payment, complained to FIFA about the Glasgow club's action.

A spokesman for world football's governing body

said last week: "We are in contact with both parties about the situation.

"The matter is pending, and we have nothing more to say on it at the moment."

Viduka returned to Parkhead only last month after fleeing to Australia over Christmas, complaining of emotional stress.

And in a later twist to the sage FIFA gave Scottish champion Celtic until last Friday to either pay Croatia Zagreb the full fee for Australian Mark Viduka, or show cause why it will not.

If FIFA is not satisfied, the club could eventually be suspended from international transfers and European competitions over Viduka, whose purchase now ranks as the most troublesome in its long history.

In an extreme situation, FIFA even has the power

to relegate Celtic down a division over the dispute involving Viduka.

The wrangle centres on Celtic's move to pay the Stg3 million (\$A7.63 million) transfer fee for Viduka in three directions: Stg900,000 (\$A2.29 million) to his former club Croatia Zagreb, Stg1.5 million (\$A3.82 million) to the player, and Stg600,000 (\$A1.5 million) to his Australian club Melbourne Knights, who brokered a "transfer-on" clause when they sold the striker.

Celtic managing director Fergus McCann decided to split the fee after Viduka's two months in exile immediately after joining the club in December.

Most of that leave was taken in Melbourne to deal with "emotional stress", while another two weeks were spent in

London while contract negotiations hit an impasse.

While Celtic feels the wronged party in the Viduka saga, Croatia Zagreb is insisting on the original terms of the transfer deal it signed with the club, and complained to FIFA 10 days ago about McCann's switch.

A FIFA spokesman added the body's player status committee had asked Celtic to either pay Croatia Zagreb the full fee, or "give a good reason why it won't".

If the problem was not solved, the case would be decided by the player status committee.

Any appeal could still be heard by FIFA's appeals committee, but it would then impose one of the three sanctions available to it if Celtic still did not comply with FIFA orders.



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Australian Corporate Games

Kalac keeping up a Dutch treat

SOCEROO goalkeeper Zeljko Kalac is the highest profile Aussie playing in Holland at the moment. The man the fans call 'Spider' is currently custodian at Roda JC Kerkrade.

Kalac, the former number one at Sydney United, joined Roda this season in a five-year deal and is enjoying himself immensely after an interesting settling-in period.

"One of the club's main problems last year was in the goalkeeping area and when I came in at the beginning of this season there was lot of pressure on me," he says.

"Roda finished the previous season in 14th position and were struggling against relegation and they kept swapping keepers which cost them a lot of points.

"They only brought in

three new players, including myself, in the off-season, so the pressure was on from the star.

"We played Ajax and Vitesse Arnhem in our opening games, managed just one point from four games and I wasn't the old Spider, but luckily the press didn't write anything bad about me, and then we won about eight games straight and climbed the table and it's been good since."

With the local press finally saying that they can put some trust in a decent goalie, Roda recently competed at an indoor tournament during the winter recess at which Kalac was voted keeper of the tournament.

But he was brought back to reality as he was on the receiving end of three goals as Roda crashed at home to Ajax

"Still it's good to be playing seriously again.

"We've played Ajax three times this season and lost them all.

"I've felt that I played good in all three games - maybe I should just have an ordinary game."

in the third round of the Dutch Cup.

"Ajax, PSV and Feyenoord are the rated teams and everyone gives them too much respect," he continues.

"We played at home (in the Cup) and we sat back and almost let them have the first 15 minutes.

"I think the scoreline flattered Ajax - we battered them in the first half but just couldn't score - then they scored in the first half after a scramble in our box, and got us twice on the counter attack in the second half.

"It's good to be playing seriously again.

"We've played Ajax three times this season and lost them all.

"I've felt that I played good in all three games - maybe I should just have an ordinary game."



PARMA EYE AUSSIES

CONTROVERSIAL AIS graduate Ante Seric will transfer to Italian club Parma at the end of the season. Seric is currently with Croatian side Hajduk Split and will move on a \$5 million transfer fee. He hit the headlines last year when he opted to play for Croatia rather than Australia.

And Parma are said to be stepping up their interest in another Aussie, with their target currently starring in the Ericsson Cup.

'Unpeople' planned major changes to affect Aussies abroad

By Neil Silver

FOOTBALL chiefs are to consider introducing a European-style "transfer window" into the British game in a move which will have direct consequences to Australian players wishing to work overseas.

Peter Leaver, chief executive of the FA Premier League, has revealed that football leagues throughout Europe were going to discuss the possibility of having a common transfer period.

Transfer windows already exist in countries such as Italy and Spain, but such a move in Britain would be a revolutionary step.

If such a system is introduced it would mean no new players could be brought in by clubs once the season kicks off.

There would instead be a period - a window probably lasting three weeks - halfway through the season when all transfer activity would take place.

The proposal is just one topic under discussion by the Association of European Leagues which met in London on Wednesday, and which was addressed by Sports Minister Tony Banks.

"It is something we want to look at and discuss whether it is feasible," said Leaver.

"We want to investi-

gate to see if it will be for the benefit of football in our respective leagues and respective countries, and in Europe as a whole."

Another key issue under discussion involves having a compulsory number of under-21 players in squads for matches, in a bid to prevent home-grown talent being stifled by foreign imports.

Leaver said: "In each of the leagues we want to do as much as we can to build up our own talent.

"In Scotland they have one rule, in Germany another, and perhaps we ought to see if we can arrive at a sensible common rule that would benefit football in each of

the countries."

Leaver said the Association of European Leagues would be lobbying UEFA to amend its statutes and recognise the relatively new body as a full partner.

"We believe we should be recognised as a full body in UEFA, which would require an amendment to the statutes," he said.

"It is nearly 18 months since five or six of us met in London and now there are 12 of us, so we feel we have made enormous progress."

"Eighteen months ago we were 'unpeople' as far as UEFA were concerned and now we are on their committees."

Leaver also dismissed suggestions of any discord between the Association and FIFA president Sepp Blatter.

"Contrary to some reports I have read, we have not been snubbed by Mr Blatter," said Leaver.

"We have been invited for the first time to meet him in Zurich in March and we intend to go and hear his proposals for the future of football."

Leeds take anti Australian stance

By Mike Collett

LEEDS United will sign players from the southern hemisphere only if they are qualified to play for a European country, chairman Peter Risdale has said. Risdale entered the club v country debate by using Sydney's Harry Kewell as an example.

Another Leeds official, Alan Hill, admitted the policy had not gone down too well in Australia.

"Our stipulation that boys coming from Down Under should not play for Australia hasn't gone down well in Australia as you can imagine, but we feel we are within our rights to take this line," said Hill, who is director of the Leeds Academy for younger players.

Premier League Leeds are particularly unhappy about Kewell who could miss a lot of games playing for Australia's under-23 squad ahead of the 2000 Olympic Games.

Kewell holds a British passport but is ineligible to play for a British national team as he has already played for

Australia.

Risdale said Leeds would prefer to risk missing out on talented players rather than lose them for chunks of the season to international commitments outside Europe.

"Ordinarily we will only take players from the southern hemisphere if they make themselves more readily available to Leeds United by qualifying for a northern hemisphere country, thereby fitting into the UEFA program ... which acknowledges free weekends when internationals are being played," he said.

Risdale's comments appeared in the match magazine for his club's FA Cup fifth round tie against Tottenham Hotspur.

Under former manager George Graham more than half of Leeds' first team was foreign but David O'Leary has turned much more to British youth.

"While our stance may risk that we miss out on the occasional talented

player we cannot risk having a team in which several players are missing for a large number of matches through international commitments on the other side of the world," Risdale said.

Hill shares his chairman's views.

"We have made a decision that any Australian kids we bring over must decide they are going to play for England, Scotland, Northern Ireland or Wales and not Australia.

"I can understand Australia's objections, but we have a lot to offer the boys, while the Aussies have nothing to offer in terms of professional contracts," Hill said.

"That is the way we look at it and I am quite prepared to discuss the matter with the Australian authorities.

"We are making a big financial commitment which includes the boys' educational package, so we don't want to find ourselves losing them to international calls on the other side of the globe for maybe eight weeks every season."

Okon Back on Bench

UNSETTLED Aussie midfielder Paul Okon is back in the scheme of things at Serie A side, Lazio.

Okon, who is considering a possible loan transfer to Belgian club Anderlecht as well as Marconi Fairfield, has been on the bench for his club in recent league games.

Meanwhile Vince Grella continues to get more and more playing time for Empoli and looks set to establish himself in the side's first team by the end of this season.

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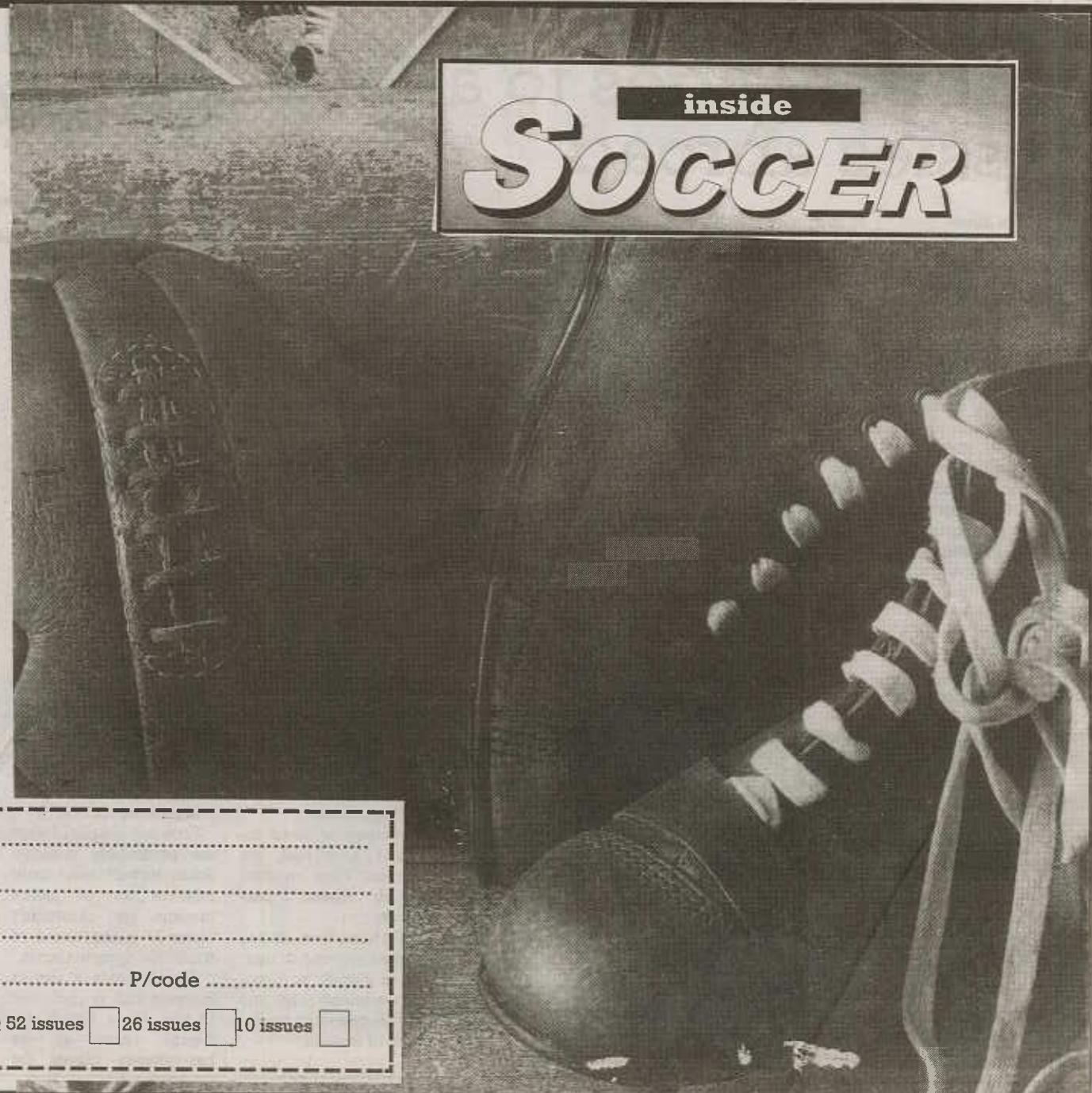
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Searching for Brazilian Magic

By Melina Boursinos

AS EIGHT year old Alex Moreira kicked the ball around the streets of his native homeland Brazil, he had only one dream.

The dream of every young boy growing up in the country which has produced some of the greatest ever football talent.

Little did he know that sixteen years later he would travel half way across the world to pursue his dream.

The gifted striker has a unique story to tell: once on a certain road to success, his career took a sudden unexpected turn when he courageously decided to face reality and make a fresh start.

The Carlton Soccer club was his chosen destination and Eddie Krnecic was his captain.

The one person who had faith in him and was determined to prove that this young man had something special to offer the Australian league.

"I started playing soccer when I was eight years old and I progressed through the

Brazilian 1st division where I played for Paraisense, Crozero and more recently Santa-crus," explains Alex.

It was at Crozero where the budding 18-year-old met international superstar

Ronaldo.

For one year the pair played side by side and developed a strong friendship.

Ironically, not long after Ronaldo became a football idol while Alex struggled to stay afloat in the cut throat world of Brazilian football, where competition is fierce and only the fittest survive.

"In Brazil it is very difficult because there are too many players and they don't pay a lot in the 1st division," admits Moreira.

Despite his uncertain future Alex persevered and when the opportunity came to play soccer and build a new life, he did not hesitate, immediately accepting the offer.

"My uncle who lived in Australia suggested that I come and play soccer here," he says.

"I played five games for the Bentleigh Greens in the Victorian Premier League and then he approached Eddie and told him about me.

"He liked Brazilian players, so he came to see me and I signed with Carlton."

Alex admits that leaving your family and friends and moving to a foreign country is

extremely difficult, but he saw the move as a new challenge.

In true essence of his optimistic character, he was determined to do well.

"In the beginning it was difficult because no one spoke to me at training, I couldn't speak English and I had no friends", he recalls.

As Alex played his first couple of games for Carlton, he failed to make an impact and fans were left searching for some Brazilian magic.

However his patience paid off and sure enough the Moreira goalscoring onslaught soon began.

Win, lose, or draw, Alex's name continues to appear on the score sheet and he has cemented a position in the starting eleven, in place of last season's top scorer Andy Vlahos.

"It was hard to adjust at the start, because the players didn't know me and they wouldn't always pass the ball," he says.

"Slowly I became fitter, more positive and my confidence grew.

"I became used to it."

It is the ultimate goal of most young Australian players, to venture overseas and make it in

the big time.

In fact, many choose to leave before even playing national league soccer.

Alex on the other hand, who came from a nation where football is life, is genuinely impressed with the standard of the game in this country.

"Here the game is a lot more powerful," says the Brazilian.

"It is not football, it is soccer.

"It is very technical and the players are more active both mentally and physically".

It is fair to say that Eddie Krnecic is a man who demands to be noticed.

He led Carlton to the grand final in their first season and is continuing to turn heads, developing a team which plays a free flowing, crowd pleasing style of football.

Alex is Eddie's number one supporter, claiming that his constant guidance and support is the main reason for his personal success this season.

"Eddie is the best coach I have had in my life," says Moreira.

"In Brazil, the coaches never talk to you.

"They are always angry and they never have time



Alex Moreira: the high-scoring Brazilian wants the Blues to go to the top

for you.

"Eddie is always talking to me, he is my good friend".

The confident striker has come a long way in a short period of time and as he looks ahead, he has no doubt that Carlton can win the 1998/99

Championship.

easy but we can do it".

The future looks promising for the Brazilian.

"I have heard a lot about last season's Grand Final and I am sure we can do well and win this time," he adds.

"I will be top goalscorer. It won't be

Nicking off to Greece

By Bruce Campbell

WOLLONGONG Wolves coach Nick Theodorakopoulos jetted out of Australia last week to Greece.

It is the second time this season that the Wolves coach has spent the bye-week there.

And it has caused a storm of controversy with the coach of the struggling Ericsson Cup side being lambasted in the *Illawarra Mercury*, a paper which is normally pro-Wolves, for his trip at a time when crowds for the South Coast club are dwindling and results are inconsistent.

The Wolves lost to bottom-placed side Canberra Cosmos in their last game.

But Theodorakopoulos has held an ambition to coach in Greece for some time and flew out to dis-

cuss offers with different clubs.

Although he signed an extension to his contract with the Wolves a few months ago he has been under fire locally for his side's poor results.

Those results, combined with the sale of their best player, Alvin Cecconi, have seen crowds at Brandon Park slump to under a thousand for some games this season.

"It would seem obvious to me that the coach's mind is not on the job," said a Wolves insider.

"Not only has the team played inconsistently but players are being played out of position and the changes are continual.

"The bad use of Michael Brooks is a case



Thompson dispute not yet settled

By Paul Millar

CARLTON'S row with cross-state rival Gippsland Falcons over the transfer of star striker Archie Thompson boiled over last week when the Melbourne side claimed he was their man.

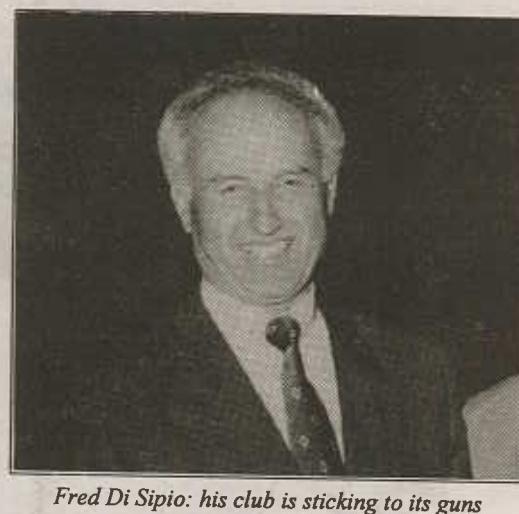
Coach Eddie Krnecic said the 21-year-old would be in the squad for Carlton's away game at Northern Spirit last Sunday - a fact denied by Gippsland president Fred Di Sipio.

The clubs have agreed on a \$40,000 transfer fee and the way Carlton sees it the deal's done.

"He trained with us on Monday and he'll be playing on the weekend," Krnecic said on the run-up to the game.

But Di Sipio said his club had not signed any release papers yet and Thompson should not even be training at Optus Oval.

The sticking point in



Fred Di Sipio: his club is sticking to its guns

the deal is a row over ongoing transfer payments.

Carlton has agreed that the Falcons will be entitled to 30 per cent of any overseas transfer fee but Di Sipio said the Melbourne club has yet to agree to any ongoing payments for a transfer in the domestic league.

"He's signed a transfer yes, but we haven't released him and don't in-

Douglas was shown the red card by referee Con Diomis for a professional foul on Thompson.

In another twist to the feud between the two sides Krnecic said his club would be lodging a report with Soccer Australia about a lack of security at the Gippsland ground.

Krnecic said Marco Bresciano was hit on the back of his head by flying glass after a bottle was hurled through a window in his team's change rooms after the Gippsland game.

Not so argues Di Sipio, who said the missile, a plastic bottle, that shattered the window came from the Carlton side.

He said the Carlton team, which is battling to make the play-offs, had been incensed when a Falcons supporter had blown a trumpet through the window and somebody hurled a bottle at him shattering the glass.

Holding on to a dream

by Stuart Jones

THE world of Christian Care is on the up.

The young Marconi midfielder has recently starred in the country where he strongly desires to play his trade - Italy.

In game one of the recent Viareggio tournament Chris starred and set up the first goal for fellow AIS graduate Luke Tomich.

He desires to play against the likes of Perugia and Bari in the more senior grades though.

But this has been a season of learning for Care.

At the start a new coach took charge and brought in new players, including youngsters who played on his side of the field.

Care looked to be struggling to make the senior squad.

However, he kept his discontent away from prying eyes and instead channelled into working hard to make the first team.

It was a hard lesson for someone who had always seen things fall into his lap.

"My attitude has been

that I do not want to lose my first team position as that would be a backward step and I have not had many of them along the way," he says.

"Anyway we need to play first team football to play for the Olyroos."

"My first aim is the World Youth Cup in 1999 (for which he has made the train on squad) and then the 2000 Sydney Olympic team."

Care's hard work was rewarded with a return to the first team recently and he has played very well for a lad in only his second senior season.

Even in a struggling side he has continually put the effort in on the park.

Off the park he maintains a professional image, and carries himself very well, obviously a student of the AIS.

"I was there in the class which included Mile Sterjovski, Luke Tomich and Tynan Scope," says care.

"The soccer there was enjoyable although to be honest by the end of it I found Canberra itself a bit boring and I was get-

ting a bit home sick."

Christian's Ericsson Cup debut when it did come, however, was smothered by another debutant, Nick Carle.

"I played my first game in the opening match of last season, at the Sydney Football Stadium against Sydney Olympic," Care recalls.

"Nick scored the winner in the 90th minute.

"It was not the best of starts for me in the NSL.

"I was really nervous before the match and the end was obviously a disappointment.

"That first season I had to learn how to get time with the ball, the pace is much quicker at that level.

"However, I became more and more comfortable with it although even now I continue to learn on the park, as you always do."

Zoran Matic instilled a lot of confidence in Care and the other youngsters at Marconi by playing them.

Current Marconi manager Frank Farina has been forced to use a lot more of the youngsters

this season and it has not been as successful.

But Care has been lucky in that he has had a team of old heads around him to learn from.

Along the way he has also had some great coaches to help him prepare for the top flight: "The NSL is a huge step up, there is much more responsibility and pressure on all the players.

"My father has always been a great help and even today he gives me coaching tips.

"Lee Sterrey (the former youth coach and number two at Marconi, now Breakers coach) taught me a lot inside Marconi about my play, he always gave me advice that I could utilise and it helped me keep my career on the right tracks."

Midfield is where Care plys his trade - he always has and expects he always will (although he admits to dreams of another spot).

As a youngster at Liverpool City and Rangers, playing at Parramatta Melita, Sydney United (reserve grade), and Marconi he played in the

middle of the park.

"My main assets in that position are my passing and my fitness," he says.

"I am also not averse to coming forward, in fact I find that really enjoyable.

"However if I was given a chance up front I would take it with both hands.

"I love to be involved in flowing, attacking movements.

"I have played all my career in midfield so I expect that is where I will always play though."

Perhaps Westfields Sports High would reflect on the fact that this young former pupil actually stayed in Australia to play his early football, to give enjoyment to the fans who actually fund that school in part, rather than going off overseas straight away.

Or perhaps Leeds United were a bit too boring for Christian Care ... whatever the reason he stayed here and continues his love of football.

"I have heaps of jerseys, videos, books and other football gear," says this passionate Marconi



youngster.

"Every time I go overseas I come back with a heap more football paraphernalia.

"I am a big AC Milan fan and love to watch them play.

"I don't see football as work, although it is a lot tougher than it was when I first started.

"I am lucky I work at something I love, not all of us have that opportunity.

But there is a downside to football for youngsters though.

"You need to dedicate yourself fully to the game.

"There is no partying or drinking to be had, or going out with your friends on Friday night.

"In the end the realisation of my dreams is bigger than all that any-

way."

Christian Care continues in his quest for Australian representation and has achieved it at youth level so far.

He yearns to one day play in Europe and also play for the Australian side.

He has always been a good ambassador for Marconi, including three youth trips to Italy.

Christian Care may dream of the clouds but he is not suffering from false dawns.

It is no surprise that he has down well in Italy this time, to his credit he has held on to a dream that so many have told him is not likely.

That self belief alone means one day number seven in a Serie A club might just be C. Care (Australia).

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No complacency in Brisbane

By Wayne Heming

BRISBANE Strikers finals surge is being built on reserves of character which have even surprised coach John Kosmina.

"A lot of people have been surprised at how we've gone of late," said Kosmina in a backhanded dig at critics of the team after it lost several early games to late goals.

"I said when I came here this was a team with potential.

"But they've shown even more character than even I thought they had.

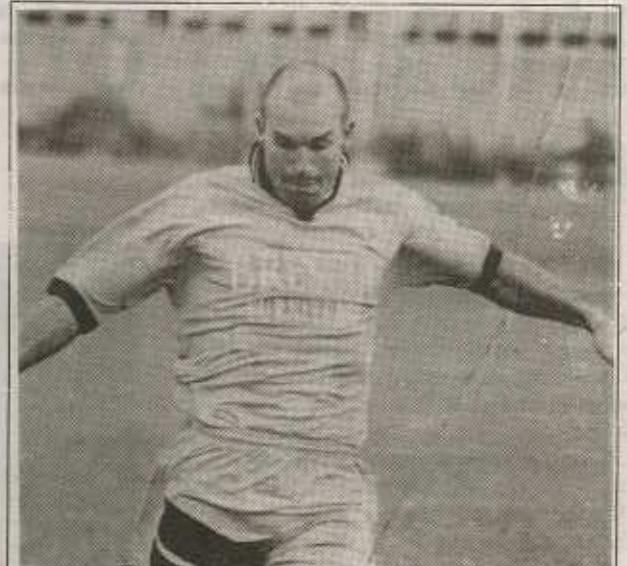
"I knew they had the potential and the spirit to succeed and it's pleasing they are now getting some joy now after coping a bit (of criticism) in the first half of the season."

The Strikers finals claims were questioned after they lost games to South Melbourne, Perth, Melbourne and Adelaide City giving up goals in the final minutes of matches.

"The guys have learnt if you can stick together and keep fighting, things do get better," says Kosmina.

"They now believe in themselves both as individuals and as a team."

Brisbane have a golden opportunity during the next month to cement a finals spot - it plays consecutive home games against 15th placed Melbourne Knights and 11th placed Wollongong.



Veteran Brisbane forward Andy Harper is back from injury

Kosmina admitted it was "pie in the sky" stuff to expect to get a perfect 12 points from its next four games and even nine points could be out of reach.

"Seven points would be great," he says.

"We've done the hard work, now we have to finish it off."

The Strikers are on a roll following last week's 5-1 thrashing of Northern Spirit, camped just a point out of the top six.

Kosmina's fortunes appear to have turned full circle with several quality players including veteran Andy Harper and young Chey Hews back from

injury, striker Stuart McLaren returning from suspension and danger-man Sean Cranney "not far away" from a comeback.

Players are queuing up to return when the team is firing but Kosmina is happy enough to have such a pleasant dilemma.

"I've got to make some tough decisions but I'd prefer it that way," says Kosmina adding that there would no inkling of complacency with his side.

"We were treating our game against Perth like it was a World Cup final and complacency won't be an issue."

SUPER ALLY

THE WAVE of migration in the 1960s brought thousand of new hopefuls to Australia, many of them forgetting about the traditions of their homeland to steer a passage towards a better life for their children.

How ironic, then, that many of those footballing kids follow the trail back to their homeland roots, almost sucked by an uncontrollable magnetic-like force.

Perth Glory's new recruit, international striker Alistair Edwards, is one such player.

Just hours after the man they call Supper Ally had put pen to a Perth contract ten days I spent a pleasant hour or so chatting about his career.

Ask him the highlight and those Celtic Roots are betrayed instantly.

"Signing for Glasgow Rangers," he shot back.

"For me that was the greatest, even though I never made the first team it was just great.

"I was there when the revolution was going on at Ibrox and Graeme Souness was bringing in all of the great stars."

That Edwards was there with the 'other' Super Ally isn't lost on him either.

"Ally McCoist is a legend, it was a great time for me.

"My parents lived in Fort William before they migrated to South Australia and then when I was seven we all moved to Perth.

"So I was 'made' in Scotland, born in Whyalla and brought up in Perth!"

Made in Scotland, indeed - and Alistair Edwards possesses all of the razor sharp wit and conversational gift that his Gaelic forebears are renowned for.

I somehow suspect that Mr Edwards senior was just that wee bit proud too when his son signed on the dotted line at Ibrox, one of the shrines of modern football.

But now Alistair Edwards is back home in Perth, although at 31 he isn't ready to talk about

PERTH GLORY has a new hero; Alistair Edwards came 'home' last weekend to play his first game at Perth Oval since signing for the western revelations.

Now the Shed has their own SUPER ALLY

BY BRUCE CAMPBELL

his retirement.

"No, I came back to play football," he laughed.

"I was all set to play in China but when my wife Gracie got pregnant there was no thought other than to come home.

"I had tried to sign up with Glory a couple of years ago but they couldn't afford that kind of wages then.

"At that time nobody expected the 15,000+ crowds so it was all a bit up in the air."

And it seems that Glory have burst their own budget to land signing number 23 of the 98/99 season in a last-ditch attempt to secure a Top Six spot.

Edwards had been expected to continue his career in Sydney but is happy with the move.

"No, I was asked to come down to the club in the morning, had a chat and signed almost straight away," he says.

"They have gone beyond their budget with me but that is a sign of the club's commitment to make it to the finals.

"Glory are a very ambitious club and I am very impressed with everything I have seen."

Edwards can talk incessantly about football and speaks glowingly of some of his pals in the game.

For Super Ally, Day

on the job, at least as the soccer paying public are concerned, was an away trip to Adelaide Sharks.

A debut goal and an *Inside Soccer* Man of the Match award are proof that this was certainly a day of business.

Now the man with his Celtic Roots firmly in the beautiful west highland town of Fort William is set to help his team scale its own Ben Nevis - an historic first-ever Top Six spot.



Kaiser confident of northern future

ACCORDING to the Northern NSW Soccer Federation manager of coaching and development, Ken Kaiser, the state of youth club soccer in the north of the state is very healthy indeed.

Kaiser, one of the nation's most respected footballing authorities told *Inside Soccer* that his job is becoming easier - and harder.

"It's becoming easier to locate and identify young footballers who have a future in the game, because the structure of our systems to identify those kids is far superior to what we have used previously," Kaiser explained.

"It's becoming harder, because we are identifying so many kids with talent, that the level of quality needed now to be regarded as outstanding, is constantly being raised."

Ken Kaiser has recently returned from Soccer Australia's Na-

tional High Performance Programme Review.

The Review was held in Sydney earlier this month.

Kaiser then reported the results of the review to Northern NSW Soccer Federation representative coaches and managers.

"I am convinced that our Northern NSW programmes are progressing in a positive manner, and that has been supported by Raul Bianco, the Olyroo coach."

The High Performance programme seeks to identify talented youngsters in the 14, 15, and 16 age groups.

Those youngsters are then brought together several times each year for weekly camps.

"It's a lot more than learning to kick a ball around," Kaiser explained.

"We talk about all aspects of the game, including fitness and

conditioning.

"What we're actually doing is giving these young people a view to a career path.

"We're practically employment officers."

Kaiser mentioned a dozen of today's soccer stars without thinking; players who had been through the programme and gone on to a career playing soccer.

He believes there are many more to come.

"Overseas clubs are paying very close attention to what we are doing," Kaiser admitted.

"The opportunities for talented Australian youngsters are better than they have ever been before."

"Soccer now truly represents an outstanding career path for the local players who want to take the step."

Saad returns for United

By Derek Royal

SYDNEY United sharpshooter Abbas Saad is due to return to first team action in a month's time.

The former Socceroo, who suffered an horrific knee injury in a pre-season trial eight months ago, was to make an appearance for the club's youth team against Sydney Olympic at Belmore Sports Ground last Sunday.

"I'm about a month away from first grade," Saad told *Inside Soccer*.

"I'll probably play the next three or four games in the second team to get my confidence and strength back and then hopefully I'll be ready for first team selection again."

Saad copped a nasty knock in Wollongong but with the worst of the re-

habilitation phase behind him, the 31 year-old says he's just taking things easy and not pushing himself.

"The more I play and the more I run on it the stronger I'm going to be," he said.

"The operation was successful, all the physio has been done so now it's up to me to put in the effort."

Since returning to Australia in 1996 after a sparkling seven year career in Asia, Saad hasn't had too much to smile about.

He joined Sydney Olympic in 1996-97 but was continually hampered by niggling injuries in what can best be described as a frustrating year.

Saad then signed for Sydney United and enjoyed a successful season under player-coach David

Mitchell.

In fact, Saad and Mitchell formed a potent combination at the sharp-end of the Sydney United attack until 'Mitch' succumbed to injury early in the season.

Saad finished the season on 11 goals, a tally that assisted United's charge for the semi-finals.

"Yeah, I was playing alongside Mitch at the start of last season, then he got injured and I ended up playing alongside some of the young boys," said Saad.

One of those young boys happened to be 19 year-old sensation Mile Sterjovski, whose 13 goals so far this season have helped keep Sydney United in second place on the Ericsson Cup ladder.

Sterjovski's form and his combination with fellow teenager Joel Griffiths has been a revelation and while their presence makes life difficult for Saad's return, he's too experienced to be worried by a little competition.

"The young guys are

excellent, superb," he says. "Young Mile and Joel are doing an excellent job."

Such an attitude towards his young teammates demonstrates why United has been so successful in the past two years.

For while the club remains in dire straits off the field, the team's on-field dedication is inspiring. Team harmony is the secret," says Saad.

"There are no superstars at United. We've got good players but they've all got good heads - all the top players.

"We play for each other and that's very important if you're going to win a championship.

"Obviously we're all losing money. I mean, it's not just one player.

"We're all playing for our futures not just the money.

"They love the game too much for them to put their head down and not give a damn, you know."

Saad would have been interested to note that Sterjovski and Griffiths were recently named in a



Abbas Saad: fighting his way back to fitness just in time for Sydney United

29-man Australian under 20 squad for the World Youth Championships in Nigeria.

The squad will be whittled down to a final roster of 18 players after a training camp at Parklea at the

end of this month and then the team will leave for Europe on March 10 to prepare for Nigeria.

Should the Sydney United tyros earn selection, and defender Michael Santalab is also in

the squad, then Abbas Saad's anticipated return will virtually be right on schedule.

And as he's shown in the past, Saad is not one to pass up an opportunity.

Inside Soccer's TRIVIA MOMENTS

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WHO captained Australia's soccer team at the 1956 Australian Olympics.

ANSWER: see Ram Scoreboard, p30.

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Coach with the Midas touch

BY David Arnold

FOR someone who has climbed to the very top at a young age, Angie Postecoglou is remarkably level-headed.

Success tends to spoil people when they arrive at Nazareth, but an injury that ended his playing career has put success firmly in perspective.

Postecoglou has turned the old adage "It's harder to stay at the top than get there" on its head.

South Melbourne rest comfortably at the top of the NSL ladder, and the observer should be forgiven for thinking South are watching contenders fall by the wayside with a knowing smile on their faces.

Despite a significant injury list, with Con Blattis and David Clarkson missing significant portions of the season, with Tansel Baser and Billy Damianos joining the jet set in Europe and with the added stress of being defending champions, South are playing as if the NSL were little more but a pickup game at Port Melbourne beach.

The expected challenge from the big Sydney clubs and Carlton has failed to materialise and even Postecoglou seems baffled at the breadth of this season's league.

Cuzzupe and Mustafa Mustafa, both VIS graduates who have come in and played senior soccer this season.

A learning experience which will undoubtedly see them progress further next season.

Postecoglou's contract expires in the winter but one senses he will remain

at South.

Happy and content with his lot so far, he used the Grand Final win as a springboard to implement changes at his beloved South Melbourne.

"I wasn't happy with the mentality of the place," he admitted.

"I'm a great one for stability which just wasn't

here when I arrived."

From a southerner's viewpoint, it would appear coaching a Sydney team is a prerequisite for the national job.

From South Melbourne's viewpoint, they don't want to lose him.

But from the top, where else can the Man with the Midas touch go?



Ange Postecoglou: South Melbourne coach with the Midas touch

Journo sues Carlton fan mag

LEADING journalist Peter Desira is taking legal action against an Ericsson Cup club fanzine, *My Blue Heaven*, which he says defamed him.

The fanzine has no official connection with the club.

Desira says that he has received an apology from Carlton but is still seeking legal satisfaction.

was defamed in the February issue of the fanzine which is devoted to Carlton Soccer Club.

The fanzine has no official connection with the club.

Desira says that he has received an apology from Carlton but is still seeking legal satisfaction.

Not Stallions Yet

MARCONI-Fairfield has not yet completed the signing of Socceroos Robbie Hooker and Matthew Bingley.

Both players have spent some time trialing with the West Sydney club and have been offered short-term contracts.

Keeper walks

CANBERRA Cosmos 18-year-old reserve goalkeeper Grant Barlow has walked out on the club after failing to cement a regular place in the struggling side's first team.

The AIS graduate had talks with coach Tom Sermanni before packing his bags.

Barlow, who has had two appearances in the Ericsson Cup this season, has not been at training all week and

the club has re-signed Tony Giannasca as backup to first choice Wilson Knezevic. With first team soccer a pre-requisite for the World Youth Cup Barlow was distraught at being left out of the 25-man squad announced by national youth coach Les Scheinflug.

Barlow has asked for time off to reconsider his future and has indicated he may retire from top class soccer because of the lack of opportunities.

Carlton under the hammer

By Bruce Campbell

SOCER Australia has confirmed that the buy-out of the Carlton Soccer Club will cost the new owners a half million dollars - \$250,000 as a franchise fee and the other quarter of a million in the form of a bank guarantee.

SA is treating the new consortium as a new club and is exercising its right to charge an admission fee.

It is believed that this has held up the official sale of the club which was expected to be publicly announced as *Inside Soccer* went to print.

The four-man syndicate is headed up by AFL player-agent Peter Jess and includes current club general manager Lou Sticca, sports manager Nick Bideau and businessman

Gary Cocks.

"The sale was due to happen on Monday (yesterday)," a source confirmed to *Inside Soccer*.

"However it is likely that the details won't be announced until later this week."

"I believe that the buying price for Carlton is \$1.5million and then there is the money due to Soccer Australia also."

"But even at that it is still a cheap deal considering that Carlton ate the grand Final in its first year."

"They have also sold two players overseas so the AFL club has done exceptionally well out of its short stint in soccer."

But falling crowds have severely affected Carlton's ability to maintain its competi-

tiveness, fuelling the desire of the ALF club to sell its soccer interests.

Now it seems almost certain that Carlton will move to Olympic Park, considered the best soccer ground in Melbourne.

But it is believed that another Melbourne bid will also be lodged at Soccer Australia within the next few weeks with several rival consortiums trying to match the huge successes being enjoyed in Sydney and Perth by new clubs.

Ironically, Carlton has brought a new wave of professionalism to the league and enjoyed instant success on the park which could only be dreamed about at Northern Spirit and Perth Glory.

Yet while those two clubs have re-written the record books for crowd attendances in Australian soccer, Carlton has been shunned by the soccer public.

The club was launched in a blaze of hype and publicity attracting big names like Jack Reilly to its administration.

Since then Reilly, Australia's 1974 World Cup goalkeeper, has left the club.

Despite statements that the club will continue this season at Optus Oval there is the likelihood that it will shift in April for the last couple of rounds and, should the Blues qualify, play its finals matches at Olympic Park.

CASSERLY BACK

SOCEROO Luke Casserly has returned from a trial with Dutch club NAC Breda after snow forced the cancellation of two trial games.

The former Marconi player, however, did enough in his short stint there to impress officials at the club where coach Graham Arnold made a big name for himself and is expected back for further trials after Northern Spirit finishes its current Ericsson Cup campaign.

Casserly is rated in the \$400,000 class which would represent a handy return for the player who moved across Sydney from Bossley Park at the beginning of this season.

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Bugsy's View

with Marconi skipper Brad Maloney

LAST Saturday's game against Canberra Cosmos was billed as a "must win" match for us.

Win we did, and thankfully we have now managed to get the monkey off our backs.

That victory ended a horrifying run of five consecutive defeats, and although that was brought on partly by a huge injury toll, everybody at Marconi is glad that we are finally back on the winning trail.

The return of Ante Covic in goal and Brendan Renaud down the flank gave us a boost, and although Canberra made it very difficult for us, I was always confident that we would take out the three points.

We went into the game against the Cosmos with the attitude that this was the first step in our journey back into the Top Six and, as I said in last week's column, I firmly believe that it is only a matter of time before we are up there with the leaders.

I don't think anybody can confidently predict exactly who will be among the Top Six at the end of the season given the volatility of the league over recent weeks.

At the beginning of December it looked as if it was going to be a two horse race between Marconi and Perth Glory for the number one spot, and both Sydney United and Northern Spirit were outside the Top Six.

A lot has happened since then with both



Perth and Marconi losing ground and Northern Spirit and Sydney United having embarked on a run of good results which puts them both firmly in contention for the play offs.

There are still 10 games to go however, and anything can happen. As I said in last week's column, Marconi are fortunate to have six of the remaining games at

home, and I'm sure that we will finish the season with a bang.

Our injury troubles are starting to ease, and once we are able to field a settled side, then I'm confident that our results will match those of our early league form when we managed to put together a

first team and gained valuable experience.

Seven of our youth squad what performed so well recently in the Viareggio Youth tournament in Italy have now know what it's like to step up from youth league to Ericsson Cup football, and they will be better players for that.

Our youth side performed brilliantly in Viareggio where they were drawn in the same group as Bari and Perugia from Italy and Pumas from Mexico.

A 2-2 draw against Perugia and a 1-0 victory over Pumas saw them advance to the next round where they were unlucky to be defeated 2-1 by Croatian side, Varteks.

The Marconi boys surprised a lot of the world's media with their performances, and the feedback has been immense.

When you consider that they were on the same stage as clubs like AC Milan, Inter Milan, Bayern Munich and Juventus, then their achievement can be truly classed as outstanding, and shows that Marconi's youth policy is starting to bear fruit.

The future at Bossley Park is looking good.

run of eight games without defeat.

There are 30 points still up for grabs, and we aim to get more than our fair share of them.

OUR injury problems have been well documented and I don't want to harp on about them, but one of the positives to emerge from it, is the number of youngsters who have come in to the

Inside Soccer cadet Luke Bear talks to Northern Spirit's Phil Moss

Phil, Northern Spirit has been a success in its initial season in the Ericsson Cup, what do you consider to be the reason for this success?

Marketing and Promotion, that's the main reason. But there is also a big cross section of nationalities at our games. That is what Spirit is all about and it is a big influence on our success.

Your fanatical supporters must be a great benefit to the team; especially the support in the Bob Stand.

Yes, when you walk on the field and take a look around the stands and at the Bob Stand it makes you feel ten feet tall.

I can also say that it has helped to pull us through in some very tight games this season.

How did you find the step up from Super League to NSL fitness-wise?

The sharpness and (general) fitness is

a little higher in the NSL but of course training every day helps.

Do you think that the flat and smooth ground at North Sydney Oval is a very big advantage?

Yes, definitely. If you look at players like Kresimir Marusic, Graham Arnold, Robbie Slater and Clayton Zane they are all suited to that kind of field and are all ball players.

How did you come to get noticed by Arnie and be selected in the team?

Well after spending eight years at Manly Warringah, one year at central Coast and last year with Eastern Suburbs Ian Gray recommended me to Graham Arnold. Arnie came to watch one of my games and I got signed. Since then I have started every game except the season opener against Sydney Olympic.

Phil Moss, thanks for your time.

No problem!

TRANSFER UPDATE

ADELAIDE CITY has signed New Zealand international midfielder Mark Foy.

The 25-year-old has joined the Zebras after a six month spell with Irish club Bohemians.

Last season Foy played

at Gippsland Falcons.

And former Stallion Matthew Bingley completed a move to Sydney Ericsson Cup club Northern Spirit late last week.

Bingley's personal terms are believed to be

worth \$140,000 a year making him one of the top paid players in the Ericsson Cup.

And Gippsland Falcons are believed to be on the verge of signing former Glasgow Rangers midfielder Sandy Robertson.

Inside Soccer's TRIVIA MOMENTS Sponsored by SOCCERLINE

WHO scored the first ever goal in the National Soccer League?

ANSWER: see Ram Scoreboard, p30.

Perth boss wants fear at home - while Jonesy is in the doldrums

By Scott Coghlan and Stuart Bell

WITH that a much-needed win against Adelaide Sharks under its belt and the hunger for goals back, Perth is rejuvenated and ready to send out a warning to other play-off rivals.

After five weeks without a national soccer league victory, the Glory bounced back to form in emphatic style last week with that 3-1 win at Adelaide Sharks.

Perth have also been bolstered by the return of goalkeeper Danny Milosevic from injury and captain Gareth Neven from suspension.

Perth was virtually untouchable at home early in the season as it fed off the support of huge crowds at Perth Oval, but in recent weeks it has dropped home games against Wollongong, Adelaide City and Newcastle.

Stange has said he wanted opposition teams to fear trips to Perth once again.

"It was that teams were afraid to come to Perth Oval, but after three losses I think they feel



more comfortable here," he said.

"It was a big, big mistake to give the other teams the opportunity to win here."

"It was unnecessary - there was no teamwork, no discipline and it was like we were another team."

"We need players to run and fight for 90 minutes, especially at Perth Oval."

Experienced striker Alistair Edwards has added much needed aggression in attack since his first game for the club against Sharks.

And news from Perth indicates that striker John Markovski could be on the way out.

"The coach is not happy with his attitude," Inside Soccer was told.

"Perth expected big things from John and, after a brilliant start, he has tailed off."

"It isn't any big secret that he is amongst the best paid players in the Ericsson Cup but coach Stange doesn't believe that he has given his best recently."

On his day Markovski is brilliant and possibly the most dangerous striker in the Ericsson Cup.

But with a salary package believed to be in the region of \$120,000 his commitment to the game is now being called into question.

Socceroo Marusic

Coaches ask for brilliant midfielder's call-up

By Derek Royal

THE sooner Northern Spirit's Kresimir Marusic is available to play for Australia - the better.

So says his club coach Graham Arnold, who has marvelled at the brilliant midfielder's form since the season began four months ago.

"He's one of the rare players in Australia who can open a game up," Arnold told *Inside Soccer*. "He's done it consistently and if you can manage him and handle him in the right way, he's great value."

Before signing the former Melbourne Knights, Sydney United and Carlton maestro, Arnold hadn't seen too much of Marusic and surprisingly, he received a lot of negative comments about the Croatian.

"I was told he wouldn't give me anything defensively and that his work-rate was non-existent," said the Spirit coach.

"But his work-rate for me has been very high."

"I don't expect him to go in for tackles, but all I ask from him is to make the opposition release the ball."

"And he's doing that." Sydney Olympic coach Branko Culina is also a big fan of Marusic, a player he believes is a class above anyone else



in the national league.

"He's a very, very skilful player who creates something out of nothing more than anyone else in the game," said Culina, who coached Marusic at Sydney United in 1996-97.

"He's also got a phenomenal work-rate and he's getting to the stage where he's a mature, experienced player."

Culina compares Maru-

sic to South Melbourne's mercurial skipper Paul Trimboli but concedes that even Trimboli doesn't possess the sheer brilliance of the Northern Spirit midfielder.

Culina added: "He can score some superb goals and it would be great for Australian soccer if he was to be naturalised."

As a player, Marusic is renowned for being the consummate professional, a man who looks after himself and trains hard.

"He also has a winners' mentality," says Arnold.

"He hates to lose any game."

Such virtues have rubbed off onto the youngsters at Spirit, so perhaps the same levels of excellence would come in handy at Socceroo level.

Culina said that if he was Socceroo coach, Marusic would be one of the first players selected, while Arnold simply added: "The sooner he can get his citizenship, the better for Australian soccer."

Culina agrees that Marusic's ability to score goals is

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Queensland Premier League previewed

THE Queensland Premier League kicks off next weekend. The *Farr Post's* Tony Moran takes a look at the likely fate of the top ten - clubs are reviewed in the order that they finished the regular 1998 season.

1. Brisbane City

Coach: Bobby Hamilton.
Facilities: A new bistro has opened for Friday nights and match days.

The bar and clubhouse area has been painted and had a general spruce up.

Increased floodlighting is planned for 3/4 size training pitch at the east end of the ground. 150 new seats in stand, to be increased through season, and new corporate boxes.

Major signings: Nathan Carloss (Mount Gravatt); Clifford Tuck (Taringa); Royce Brownlie (Brisbane Strikers).

Major losses: Mark Bennett (Gold Coast)

Who are the important players? Up front, Brownlie and Chris Slater were a productive partnership in the 1997 season and are expected to be so again, while at the back, Wayne Strange should play a dominant role with the loss of Bennett.

Comment: On past form City must be the favourites again to finish top of the pile come September.

They've added to the squad, and not lost too much.

Hamilton is a shrewd enough coach to know the strengths and weaknesses of his opposition, and after winning the competition by ten points last year, but losing both play-off matches, he'll be even more determined to end up with some silverware at the end of the season.

2. Rochedale Rovers

Coach: Peter Bannon has signed a new two-year contract.

Major signings: Nick Alidenes, originally from Lismore, has been playing for St. George in New South Wales; Robert Edwards from New Zealand. Also Dragan Jekic from Yugoslavia, who has not played with any previous clubs in Australia. And Kieran Cooper is making a comeback.

Major Losses: The Lees brothers, who have gone to the Gold Coast.

Now he's finally made it to the big league, it will be interesting to see how he copes at a new club, with new players around him.

Plus young Matt Olley coming through well, and looks to be a good prospect.

But the whole squad is important.

They've retained all last season's squad - the bulk of them have now been together for two seasons, and are beginning to blend in well.

They came close last season, and are looking for some silverware to round it off this time.

Comment: Rovers have a good mix of youth and experience, and will always be up there amongst the leading pack.

They've never really lived up to expectations, and that first premiership has still eluded them.

It's only a matter of time before they do win something - could it be 1999?

3. Brisbane Lions

Coach: Miron Bleiberg.
Major signings: Vedran Becirbegovic (ex-Strikers, from Belgian 2nd Division); Wade Cannon (back from loan spell at Wynnum).

Relying more on reserve and youth grade players from last season stepping up to first team, possibly including ex-youth grade Reg Davani who spent last season at Ipswich Knights.

Major Losses: Steve Jackson, Paul Worroll, Mark Geritz, David Lonsdale (all retired, Lonsdale after playing at the club since age 7), Michael Brockwell (North Star), Craig Barnes (Taringa), Marc Flemington (Easts).

Who are the important players? With a number of youngsters stepping up, the experienced players will be important, according to coach Bleiberg, particularly the "backbone" of the team; Frank Mengotti at sweeper, Darren Hillier at central midfield, and Greg Di-Losa and Warren Allen up front.

Comment: Lions are another club who will always do well.

Last season they won the Grand Final from third place, and will be up there again this season.

4. Ipswich Knights

Coach: Frank Pimblett.

Facilities: No major work

Major signings: None

Major Losses: Kevin Meacock (retired), Craig Collins (Mt. Gravatt), Barney Smith (Sydney United)

Who are the important players? It's a team game, but Knights will need Brenley Jefferd on the field full time this season, after last was disrupted by injury - "no more gifted player in Premier League".

Also, Peter Vogler has announced this will be his last season, so will be looking to end on a high note.

Comment: Frank Pimblett has done very well with a young Pine Rivers United team in recent years.

Now he's finally made it to the big league, it will be interesting to see how he copes at a new club, with new players around him.

5. Taringa Rovers

Coach: John Ogden.

Facilities: Taringa has begun (although late) the upgrade of both fields.

Priority has obviously been given to No.1 field with work commencing a few weeks ago.

Coupled with the in-ground watering system should be ready for the first round.

Plans are also underway for an additional covered grandstand to seat 300 to be constructed.

Major signings: Ben Wood (Wynnum); Jason Poggi (revived career); Craig Barnes (Lions & Australian Joey); Jamie Lowndes (English Division 1 apprentice); Nicky Kuiper (Dutch Division 1 youth policy).

Major Losses: Des Hughes (Strikers), Aaron Bakker

(North Star), Daryll Hathaway (AIS scholarship), and Cliff Tuck (City).

Who are the important players? The team has played with a lot of variety in pre-season fixtures, and especially with the volume of player rotation going on.

New ace signing from Wynnum, Ben Wood has settled in well and will pose problems for many teams in front of the quality Taringa defence.

His control, passing and ability to score goals on both feet from anywhere inside 35yds is remarkable.

Comment: John Ogden was bitterly disappointed to miss out on a finals' place last season (a 1-0 loss to Rochedale on the final day of the season robbed Taringa), and so will be looking to better that this year.

\$250,000, to commence soon.

Major signings: Scott Moreland (Southside Eagles), Steven Forshaw (Beenleigh), Anthony Roche (Mt. Gravatt), Paul de Vries (Pine Rivers)

Major Losses: Ben Wood (Taringa Rovers), Luke Adair (Gold Coast).

Who are the important players? Look for a good season from Nick Hadland, and look forward to Owen Filewood returning from QAS an improved player.

Also hoping to persuade old favourite Geoff Maltby out of retirement.

He's looking trimmer and fitter than in his playing days - "and if he was a good player then, what will he be like fit?"

Comment: Last season was disrupted by the loss of coach George Cowie part way through.

Major signings: Four major signings; Gary McGinnis - sweeper - who played for Wynnum in the 1997 Premier League, and who is now coaching the Waves reserve team; Phillippe M'Bella - a striker - who played in the French second division for Bordeaux, and has also played for Young Boys Berne in Switzerland; Daniel Cummings - another striker who has played for Macarthur Rams in the NSW league;

Comment: Will be hoping for a more settled season this time, after major upheaval midway through last season saw president Bill Holmes and coach Steve Faulkner leave the club.

On the field, were capable of causing an upset, and with some shrewd signings and the know-how of new coach Stewart, could well show some more consistency this time round.

(Berserker, Rockhampton), Simon Pilic (Carrara, Gold Coast).

Major Losses: Trevor Evans (Ipswich Knights), Nathan Carloss (City), Anthony Roche (Wynnum)

Who are the important players? The experienced players, such as goalkeeper Mark Bland and new signings Galloway and Brayshaw, will be the ones who matter.

Comment: The Waves had a shaky start in their first season in 1997, but last year failed to live up to that form.

Always difficult to beat at home, because of the long journey teams have to make to get up there.

Unfortunately they suffer the same fate when travelling down to Brisbane and beyond.

A good bet for a middle-of-the-table finish.

9. Gold Coast City

Coach: Ken Lindsay.

Facilities: The Southport soccer complex

Major signings: Mark Bennett (from City), Ian Hutchinson (Taringa Rovers), Eddie Lees (Rochedale), Colin Bethell (Mt Gravatt).

Who are the important players? As well as the new signings, have re-signed Martin Simpson (goalkeeper), midfielder Peter Grierson and striker Troy Greenwood (both Queensland rep players). Brett Adams, Adam Evans, and Michael Richardson are all returning for this season.

Comment: Gold Coast started off well last year, but a number of injuries to key players revealed their lack of depth, something that is necessary for such a long season.

Hopefully their new signings, and existing squad members will have learned from their inaugural season, and will be able to improve on their ninth place.

Newly Elected. Toowoomba United

Coach: Gary Scott

Facilities: Work underway on upgrading lighting and installing grandstand seating.

Major signings: None confirmed at time of going to print.

Major Losses: None confirmed at time of going to print.

Who are the important players? Total team effort is required as a big learning curve lies ahead.

However, Steven Strong in central midfield (recently offered a trial at Gippsland Falcons) expected to be one of their mainstays, and the workrate of wing backs Andrew Wilkinson and Gavin Freier could also prove important.

Comment: Coming in at the eleventh hour to replace Beenleigh, Toowoomba cannot have been fully prepared for the Premier League.

However their form in recent seasons has shown that they are too good for the semi-pro Division 1 competition, and their form in the Silver Boot shows they will be competitive (despite a 3-0 loss to Wynnum).



Wynnum District coach Peter Tokesi: hoping to do better than last season's sixth placing

Photo by Paul Harley

He seems to have the knack of getting the most out of young, raw inexperienced lads, and I'm sure that there'll be a few new faces in his squad again this year.

Taringa should make the four, and from there anything can happen.

6. Wynnum District

Coach: Peter Tokesi.

Facilities: Major work on the clubhouse, worth some

Replacement Tokesi has had time to get to know his squad, and with his new additions expects a more consistent and competitive season.

7. Bundaberg Waves

Coach: Tony Walmsley, used to be the Director of Coaching for the Bundaberg region, and he now works full-time for the Waves.

Facilities: The "Across The Waves Sports Complex"

8. Mount Gravatt

Coach: John Stewart

Facilities: Vast improvement to the playing surface plus renovations to dressing sheds.

Major signings: Ex-Striker, Andy Brayshaw (Gold Coast), Craig Collins (Ipswich Knights), Kieren Galloway, Adam Watson (both Beenleigh), Calvin Gnech, Nigel McLure (both Wynnum), Roy Bob

Demon Foxe playing with gusto

by Derek Royal

BEFORE the Blacktown City Demons take the field, young skipper Damien Foxe tries to instil some pride into his boys, reminding them of who they're playing for, and encouraging them as champions, to give a little bit extra on the field.

"I like to offer encouragement and I'm not real fiery towards the other players, as long as they do their job," Foxe told *Inside Soccer*.

And although he received a yellow card in the opening round encounter against Eastern Suburbs, Foxe does his best to set an example and to try to settle his team down.

Blacktown courses through the veins of the 24 year-old defender, who boasts 110 games for the Demons' first team.

A Winston Hills junior, Foxe first played soccer at the age of seven, winning three championships and a NSW champion-of-champions title at under 12 level.

"We always played on a full-sized pitch," he remembers, "and we were at soccer all day and just loved it."

"Those were great days, with all the mums and dads yelling from the sidelines."

Demons team-mate Aaron Holst, the former Marconi-Fairfield player, also played alongside Foxe at Winston Hills.

Foxe describes himself as a good marker and strong in the air.

At six foot one, that's no surprise, but what is surprising, is the talented Demon hasn't tried his luck at a national league club - not yet anyway.

"I'd like to have a go at national league," he says.

"I intend to have a go - I'm only 24, so there's plenty of time."

In the meantime, he intends on helping his beloved club to successive championship victories:

Last year's unlikely 1-0 Grand Final win against Bonnyrigg White Eagles provided Foxe with one of his most cherished moments.

"Watching the golden goal go in in last year's Grand Final was the highlight of my career," he says.

"We hadn't beaten Bonnyrigg all season so beating them in the Grand Final was a special feeling."

Indeed.

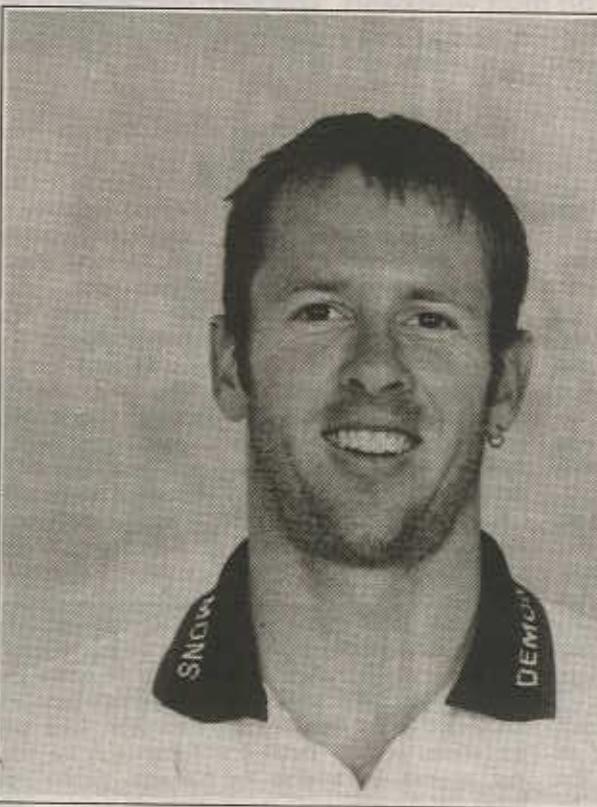
One of Blacktown's strengths last season was their harmony off the field, with the players socialising together and enjoying each other's company.

"They're a great bunch of blokes," he says.

"There's good companionship and good mateship at the club."

"That's why I love the place so much."

While everyone within



the soccer fraternity is aware that Damien's 'kid' brother Hayden is a full-time professional at Eddie Thomson's Sanfrecce Hiroshima club in Japan, not everyone would know that another brother, 26 year-old Jeremy, plays premier league at Winston Hills.

Chick Foxe, the boys' dad, must have a chuckle to himself that his three boys play the round ball game.

In his day, Chick was a pacey rugby league back with Belmore Old Boys, but he's probably spent more time at soccer grounds the past two decades than rugby league ovals.

"Mum and dad have always encouraged me to play and to give it 100 per cent," says Foxe, and as everyone out Gabbie Stadium way know, their young captain always does so with great gusto.

Name: Damien Foxe
Club: Blacktown City Demons
Position: Defender Age: 24 First Team
Appearances: 110
Former Clubs: Winston Hills (juniors),
Melita Eagles (juniors)
Representative Honours: NSW

Soccer Illawarra With thanks to Otto Bader

BULLI Soccer Club are holding a fund raising Trivia Night on 26 February.

The club's Balls Paddock ground was devastated in last August's storms.

Tickets cost \$15 a head and HG Nelson will compete the evening.

PORT KEMBLA won their last serious pre-season match 3-1 away to ACT Premier League side Monaro.

The game was staged to officially open renovations to Monaro's Riverside Stadium.

This year Monaro is celebrating its 30th year in senior football.

ILLAWARRA UNITED will play this season at Ulster Avenue.

The Turkish backed club will play in the Illawarra First Division this season.

Coach is John Silcock and they have recently signed former State League midfielder Baskin Bostanci.

OCEAN Park is home for newly promoted Premier League side Woonona.

The former icon of Illawarra soccer is back in the top flight this season after some years in the lower division but the state of their ground has drawn a lot of adverse

reaction from other clubs.

The ground is little more than a public field with dog owners using it as an exercise paddock at nights and highlights a growing problem facing Illawarra soccer; the scarcity of grounds.

Many believe that the future lies in shared facilities.

Interestingly, all four venues for the Corrimal Leagues Club Cup are based in the northern suburbs; Towradgi, Bellambi's Elizabeth park, Memorial Park and Tarrawanna - none of them more than a mile or so apart.

BILL Butler Park is the new home venue of Kemblawarra Soccer Club.

Backed by the Portuguese Sports & Social Club Kemblawarra are looking for a big season this year.

The million dollar project will be ready in time for the opening round of the Premier League at the start of April.

Kemblawarra will be coached this season by former Wolves coach John Fleming who stepped in half way through last season.

CHAMPION club Wollongong White Eagles will play their home matches this season at Brandon Park.

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Unfulfilled ambitions

By Derek Royal

HE MAY be small, but Robert Gomez is one of the most dangerous marksmen in the NSW Super League.

The Bonnyrigg White Eagles striker possesses superb ball control and a turn of pace that gets the crowd onto its feet whenever he's near the ball.

Gomez has been around the traps - playing his junior football at Apia Leichhardt and St George, before spending four years at Marconi-Fairfield, where he played six national

Name: Robert Gomez
Club: Bonnyrigg White Eagles
Position: Striker
Age: 22
Former Clubs: Apia Leichhardt (juniors), St George (juniors), Marconi-Fairfield, Bankstown City Lions
Representative Honours: NSW under 13s, 14s, 15s; Australian under 17s

league matches under coach Andrea Icardi.

His team-mates then included Matthew Binley, Paul Okon, Gary Van Egmond and Steve Corica, players who went on to footballing glory at various clubs around the world.

"I played mostly youth league," Gomez told *Inside Soccer*.

"But it was a good experience playing half a dozen national league games."

Gomez learnt that at national league level, the pace of the game was

faster and mentally, the players thought quicker.

But skill-wise, he feels that it's not much different to playing Super League.

"It was all mostly first-time touches and a lot tougher, a lot quicker," he says.

"But the skills levels between NSL and Super League aren't much different."

The experience obviously did the youngster some good, as his next port of call was the Solomon Islands, where he helped the Australian under 17s through the Oceania World Cup qualifiers, before journeying to Japan for the Finals.

"We played against some skilful sides such as Argentina and Ghana," he said, "but the biggest thrill for me at the time was playing for Australia.

"It was a whole differ-

ent ball game."

But since returning from Japan, Gomez says he's had nothing but setbacks.

Contract problems at Marconi led to Gomez spending a season on loan at Bankstown City Lions, while further opportunities to play national league were also thwarted.

"It was frustrating," he said.

"I had offers to go elsewhere but it was always a case of 'you can't leave because you're on contract' or clubs weren't prepared to pay the money being asked."

"I've just been at the wrong place at the wrong time."

But Gomez seems to have found some happiness at Bonnyrigg White Eagles, where he has enjoyed playing in a talented team that last year, lost just three matches -

including a shock grand final defeat to Blacktown.

"I want us to win the league again and win the Grand Final - then I'll be looking at the next step up to the NSL," he says.

Gomez is adamant he's still waiting for his career highlight, but the former under 17 international is happy to bide his time and follow his father Carlos's advice.

"He just tells me to never give up hope and that's been his attitude ever since I started playing. He's always been there and mum's the same."

The 22 year-old excitement machine is due for a change in fortune, so perhaps 1999 is the year when Robbie Gomez fulfills his national league ambitions.



VICTORIAN BIG MATCH UPDATE: ROUND 3

Green Gully scrape home

VPL BIG MATCH REPORT with Bert van Beedaf

TWICE in as many rounds title candidate Green Gully scraped home 3-2 after leading 3-0.

Last week South Dandenong nearly bridged the gap, last Sunday Fawkner fell behind to three great goals within 20 minutes only to out-point the Cavaliers in the second half and almost snatch a draw from a tough game played in scorching temperatures.

Referee Perry Mur allowed a two-minute water break halfway each half in accordance with Victorian Soccer Federation instructions as the mercury burst towards 33 degrees Celcius.

Similar breaks were held at other VPL matches. "We were told we could allow a two-minute stop if the temperature went above 30 degrees and we needed it today," Mur said afterwards.

The Cavaliers blitzed the Blues with three top-class goals that should have set up an easy victory.

A poor defensive clearance gave midfielder Tony Neceski the opportunity to strike on the turn from 25 metres leaving Fawkner 'keeper Maurice Gonzalez no chance to save the shot.

Nick Papadopoulos provided Zdravko Atanasovski with a short pass just outside the box and

the right full-back let fly on the volley for 2-0 after only 12 minutes.

Eight minutes later a Zladko Donev pass put George Georgiadis through for a three-goal lead at half time.

Fawkner had a chance to score before the break but Tom Simsek's one-on-one was foiled by Green Gully 'keeper Chris Vella, who also courageously dived at Chris Sterjovski's feet to save the rebound.

Fawkner coach Ken Murphy's appeal to his players at half time was,

"Let's at least win the second half", which is what Fawkner did.

Four minutes after the break Simsek finally broke through with a lowball underneath Vella from an Ivan Duzel pass and Fawkner appeared to take the initiative as Green Gully let slip several chances.

Fawkner substitute Nathan Alexopoulos (for injured Peter Bordignon in the 65th minute) saved a header by Steve Mangos off the line in the 66th minute and Gonzalez denied Daniel Genovesi from close range with a tremendous reflex save.

Fawkner kept creating chances but Simsek again failed in a one-on-one with Vella in the 82nd minute, while Marco DiSauro and Alexopoulos mis-hit their attempts.

Reserve goal keeper Manny Papas, on as a field player for the injured Enzo DeSantis after Fawkner had used both substitutes, struck Fawkner's second goal in the 89th minute giving the Blues their "second

that in tight games we can't afford to give away goals. We are working on these things and we'll continue to work on them," Dobson said.

Murphy said it's near impossible for any team to come back from three

second half but it proved too hard to come back from three goals down," Murphy said.

Fawkner missed striker Santo Ammenue who served his last match of a two-match suspension after an off-the-ball incident in the first round against St Albans.

He'll be back against South Dandenong on Saturday.

Green Gully plays Bentleigh Greens on Monday night.

In other results Bentleigh Greens drew 1-1 with Melbourne Raiders, St Albans downed Altona East 2-0, Preston beat Altona Magic 3-0 and Port Melbourne defeated Sunshine 2-0.

VICTORIAN Premier League newcomer Westvale may be freshly promoted from division one of the State League, its players are no novices.

Westvale manager Aki Missios believed the team would be competitive for a place in the mid-table ranks.

"It's now a matter of making a go of it and we're looking towards a mid-table finish."

With four clubs relegated this season, half the current league will be struggling to avoid the dreaded drop.

Then there are Angie Goutzioulis and George Karkaletsis, team mates from Souths and the Bergers, Gerry McAleer, ex-Preston and Bulleen, Adrian Pender also ex-Preston and Heidelberg.

There are no finals this season.

The club that finishes first at the end of the home-and-away rounds wins the title.

Next season the league reverts to a four-club finals format, abandoning its former five-club play-off.

The Westvalers showed their determination during their first home match at Green Gully under lights against defending champion Bulleen Kings.

They went ahead after nine minutes with an Goutzioulis goal.

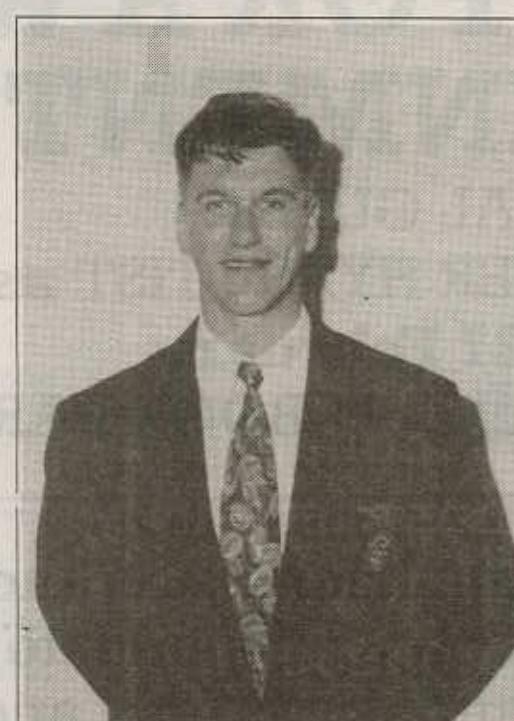
Bulleen had defender Della Rocca red-carded for a foul on McAleer after 15 minutes and the Valers surged ahead in the 34th minute through Henry Nuniz.

But Bulleen got level with a header and a penalty from Danny Gnjidic in the 43rd and 51st minutes.

Yet, Stubbins put Bulleen ahead again with a penalty in the 54th minute before Gnjidic levelled with another header to score the first hat-trick for the season with 15 minutes left.

Stubbins said he was fairly satisfied with the performance.

"We lost badly 6-1 to Port Melbourne in the first round and now we've got our first point against the defending championship. Maybe we could've won it, but putting three goals past the championship team I thought was a pretty good effort," Stubbins said.



Westvale coach Phil Stubbins

half win", but just missing out on gaining a point from the scorcher.

Green Gully coach Ian Dobson conceded that his team's late second half fade-out twice in a row gave cause for concern.

"The team has tended to relax when we're three goals in front, but it's true

goals down, but he believed his team had out-played Green Gully in the second half and with a bit of luck could have won the game.

"In the last 20 minutes we ran over the top of them and created so many chances. We were the better team in the



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DIRECTORY**

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Bannockburn Soccer Club
(Junior-Adult)
Saturday February 6 & 13, 11am-1pm
Bannockburn Oval
Contact: Marcus Ammann 9402 8929

Barker Old Boys Soccer Club
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Contact: Ed Yue 9873 2164

Berowra Soccer Club
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Sunday February 7, 10am-1pm
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Contact: Leo Houlcroft 9985 7641

Chase United Soccer Club
(U14, Adult, O35)
Contact: Stuart Dever 9482 3534

Chatswood Rangers Soccer Club
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John Schrooten 9411 1340 Adults

Christian Football Club
(Adult only)
Contact: John Toyer 99456 3624

Clarke Road Soccer Club
(Junior only)
Sunday February 14 & 21, 10am-5pm
Carrington Field, Carrington Rd, Wahroonga
Contact: Stephanie Binsted 9488 8352

Corpus Christi Hawks Soccer Club
(Junior only)
Contact: Terry Darlington 9449 2514

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Contact: Bob Tomasic 9958 1493

Gordon Soccer Club (Junior only)
Saturday February 13, 9-12, Gordon Shopping
Centre
Saturday February 20, 9-12, Darnley Oval
Contact: Sandra Chong 9498 1264

Greenwich Sports Club
(Junior-Adult)
Thursday February 18, 6.30pm-8pm
Saturday February 20, 8.30am-10am
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(U7-U11)
Contact: Justin Moses 9904 7943

Hornsby Hts Sports
(Junior-Adult & Womens/Girls)
Sunday February 7, 9am-2pm
Montview Clubhouse, Kookaburra Rd, Hornsby
Hts
Contact Ian Imrie 9476 6435

Hornsby RSL Youth Club
(Junior only)
Contact: Adrian Arthur-Smith 9476 6274

Hornsby RSL
(Adult only)
Every Tuesday & Thursday in Feb, 6.30pm
Mills Park, Asquith
Contact: Roy Ashpole 9476 2054

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Saturday February 5 & 13, 9am-4pm
Sunday February 14, 9am-4pm - Seniors only
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(Adult only)
Contact: John Bradfield 9488 7721

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Saturday February 6, 9am-12noon

Longueville Sporting Club
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(Adult only)
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West Lindfield Bowling Club, Highfields Rd
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Eric Forsythe 9416 5697 Juniors & Women

Mosman Marist Soccer Club
(U7-U11)
Contact: Paul Hammerton 9969 5906

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Saturday February 6 & 13, 10am-2pm
Mount Colah Public School, Telopia St
Contact: Chris Freer 9457 8992

Mt Kuring-gai Soccer Club
(Adult only)
Contact: Kevin Venner 9457 9412

Mt St Bernard Soccer Club
(U7-U11)
Contact: Rocco Crino 9449 7032

Northbridge Soccer Club
(Junior-Adult & Women/Girls)
Sunday February 7, 10am-12noon
Northbridge Oval, Sailors Bay Rd
Contact: Nikki Mackay 9958 2646

Northside Monash Soccer Club
(Juniors-Adult)
Contact: Jeff Miller 9983 9689

North Sydney Bears Soccer Club
(Juniors-Adult)
Sunday February 7, 9am-12noon
Cameray Oval Dressing Sheds
Contact: Allan Stomann 9955 2522 Juniors
Mike Speed 0417 037 887 Mens

North Sydney Boys High
(U12-Adult)
Contact: Zaheer Reporter 9953 5681

North Sydney Artarmon Soccer Club
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Contact: Simon Cox 9922 1128

North Turramurra Soccer Club
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Contact: Chris Soupidis 9449 1154

Prouille Soccer Club
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Saturday February 6, 9am-12noon
Prouille School, Water St, Wahroonga
Contact: Chris Goldrick 9144 2652

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Saturday February 6 & 13, 9am-2pm
St Ives Village Shopping Centre
Contact: Vicki McComas 9440 8292

St Michaels Soccer Club
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Contact: John O'Neill 9427 4380

Uni of Technology Soccer Club
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Pam Fransen 9719 2523 Womens

Wahroonga Soccer Club
(Junior-Adult)
Saturday February 6, 9am-1pm
Sunday February 14, 9am-1pm
Golden Jubilee Oval, Wahroonga
Contact: Margie Caskey 9489 7615

West Pymble Soccer Club
(Junior-Adult)
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West Pymble Shops, Kendall St
Contact: John Hill 9498 5443

Willoughby United Soccer Club
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Rams upset champion Demons

By Derek Royal

SUCCESS in life, they say, is all about taking opportunities.

So too is success in football.

Macarthur Rams taught champions Blacktown City Demons a thing or two about the art of converting chances in an exciting 3-2 victory at Lynwood Park.

Yet so dominant was Blacktown in the opening 10 minutes of the match that a Demon goal-rush seemed inevitable.

Damien Smith taunted the Rams' defence with his darts down the left-hand touchline and the speed and positional sense of attackers Jason Bennett, Jon Angelucci and Stuart Cleary split the Rams rearguard time after time.

Bennett skimmed the bar with two shots, Angelucci narrowly missed with a header, but somehow the Rams held on by the skin of their teeth.

Finally, in the 12th minute, Demons' de-

fender Paul Yates opened the scoring.

But unfortunately, the hapless Yates turned the ball into his own net after skewing a Rams cross past startled keeper Fernando Greco.

The one-goal lead lifted Macarthur's spirits considerably and to the delight of the home crowd, the Rams started playing some delightful football - with superb interpassing and intelligent running off the ball.

Blacktown on the other hand relied on the long-ball to feed its pacy frontline, but still Bennett and his side-kicks couldn't break through.

Bennett, Steve Cutler and Angelucci all went desperately close for the Demons, but somehow, the Rams held on.

In fact, Macarthur increased their lead when, in the 37th minute, Kain Rastall blasted a rasping shot into the top corner of the net from 30 metres.

Incredibly, from three brief forays into opposition territory the Rams held a two-goal lead.

Demons skipper Damien Foxe decided enough was enough and from inside his own half, the tall stopper set out on a fine solo run that culminated in a cool finish to bring the score back to 2-1.

The skipper's goal seemed to lay down a challenge to his front-line and almost a quarter of an hour into the second half, Angelucci obliged

Day of upsets in Super League

by drilling home the equaliser from close-range.

Blacktown then increased the tempo and once again Rams keeper John Crawley copped the flak from all directions.

Brown, Bennett and Cleary all went close but once again, it was the Rams who scored next.

And once again it was a defender who had to show how it was done.

Stopper Richard Lloyd decided that what his Blacktown opposite Damien Foxe could do, he could do just as well.

Lloyd simply collected the ball 30 metres from goal and after beating three tackles, calmly slotted home the winner.

Inevitably, the Demons pursued an equaliser and

Demons coach Brian Brown was philosophical after the game and said he was pleased with everything except the result.

"We created enough chances to win the game and if we play like that all season, we'll be there or thereabouts when it comes to the finals," he said.

Macarthur coach Casey De Bruin said he felt his side played a little flat but was happy with the result and the fact that they showed some grit in the face of adversity.

"We showed a little more grit, a little more organisation and a little more experience," said De Bruin.

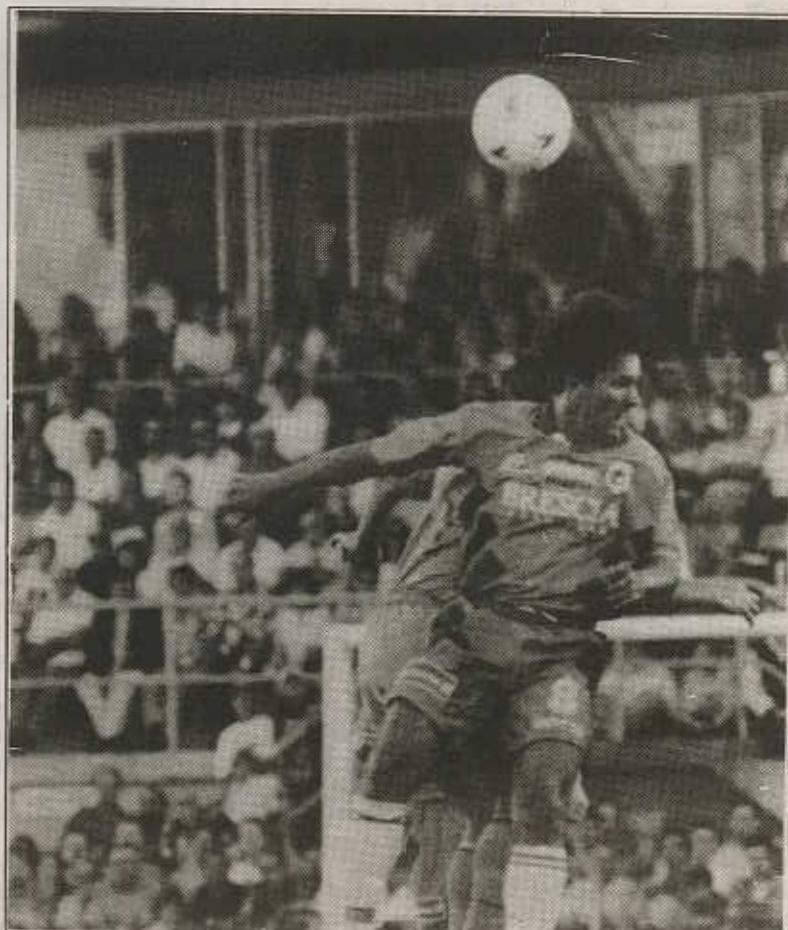
"At the end of it all, considering the performance and with three or

the break after goals by Nathan Byrn and Peter Preston, but the Sharks pulled one back midway through the second half when Levi Stephen cracked home a brilliant volley from 25 metres.

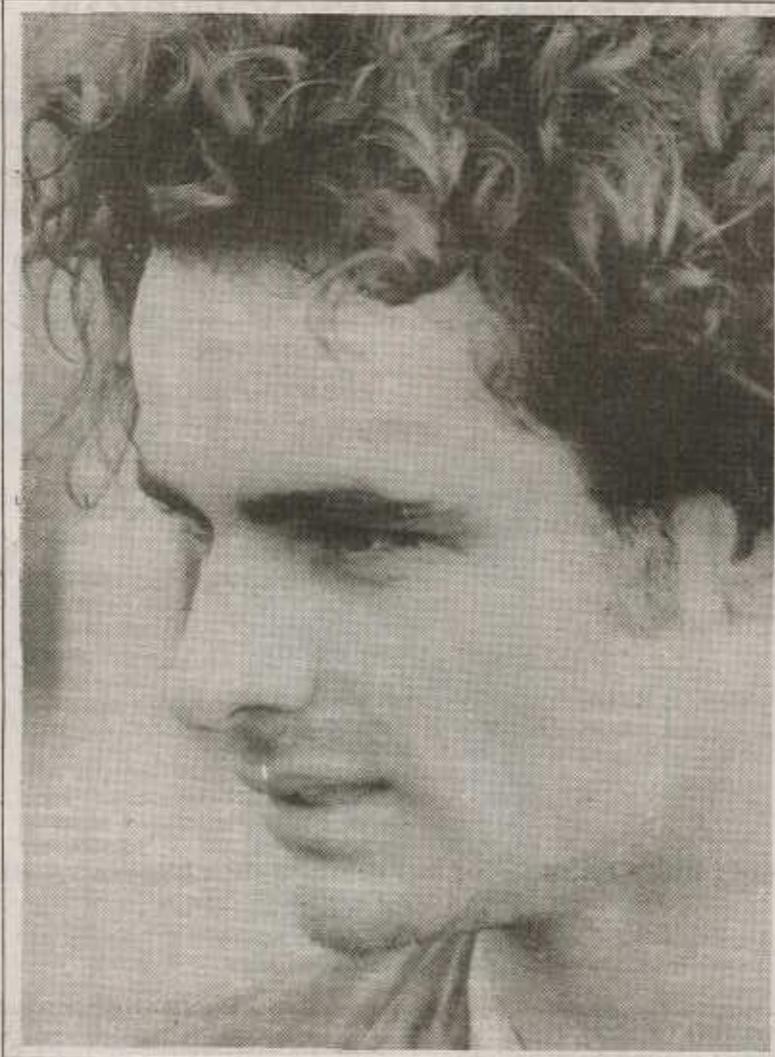
Stephen and Craig Hobbs shone for the Sharks while Steve Angelov and Marcus Steel stood out for the Coasties.

Newly-promoted Fairfield Bulls continued their good start to the season by holding premiership favourites Bonnyrigg White Eagles to a 2-all draw at Nineveh Field.

Sam Larocca scored both Bulls goals, while Paul Dee and Robbie Gomez struck for the White Eagles.



Eric Hristodoulou



Leichhardt's Fabio Macolino

created further chances in front of goal.

But the goals just didn't come.

In the end, Macarthur simply capitalised on their opportunities while Blacktown squandered far too many of their own.

White Eagles coach John Turner was happy with his side's performance and made special mention of Dee, Scott Xuereb and Mark Racker.

In a tale of two halves, Canterbury-Marrickville handed Bankstown a

footballing lesson to the tune of 5-1.

The Lions led 1-0 at the break after old warhorse Mile Todoroski scored in the 20th minute, but the second half was all Canterbury, with Nick Bolevski and Jane Talcic scoring two goals each, and Jimmy Nikas grabbing one.

Bankstown coach Sakib Lovic was bitterly disappointed by his side's efforts and suggested that his boys had a lot to learn if they were to make an impression on the competition.

Arno Bertogna's Leichhardt Tigers scored a tough 2-1 victory against Eastern Suburbs at Wentworth Park.

Easts led 1-0 at the break through a goal to Steve McCombe but midway through the second half Leichhardt equalised through what Easts coach John Calleja described as "a dubious penalty".

Newcomer Sarkis Bouhdahr scored the Tigers' winner on the stroke of full-time.

Bertogna praised his side's character and mentioned captain Eric Hris-



NSW SOCCER FEDERATION SUPER LEAGUE

ROUND 3

Saturday 20th February

Blacktown City Demons v Sutherland Sharks

Gabbie Stadium, 6:00pm

Bonnyrigg White Eagles vs Parramatta Eagles

Serbian Centre, 6:00pm

Sunday 21st February

Bankstown City Lions vs Fairfield Bulls

Jensen Park, 5:00pm

Ryde City vs Eastern Suburbs

Wentworth Park, 3:00pm

Leichhardt Tigers vs Macarthur Rams

Lambert Park, 5:00pm

Canterbury Marrickville vs Central Coast Henson Park, 6:00pm

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Satisfaction for Lowe in the NYL

By Tony Moffitt

THE Newcastle Breakers youth side are entitled to be considered as real contenders come the end of the season, despite being regarded as far from the best side in the National Youth League competition.

That analysis comes from a man who should know; Breakers youth coach, David Lowe.

"We're a good side, don't get me wrong," Lowe told *Inside Soccer*, "but we're not the best team in terms of basic skill levels."

Lowe believes the Breakers youngsters, whilst being very capable footballers, are so well placed on the current competition ladder because of their work off the ball.

"We match the highly skilled teams in the competition with typical Newcastle determination," Lowe explained.

"We've got a bunch of players we are honest on the park, first and foremost.

"They go out and give it all they've got.

"They show the sort of character that a team needs if it is to succeed –

that's where we are strongest."

The youth league ladder is a keenly contested affair at this stage of the season but coach Lowe believes there are seven teams in the hunt for an end-of-season berth.

Unlike the senior competition, semi-finals in the Youth League make room for only four teams.

Three of the current contenders will miss out but Lowe doesn't believe Newcastle will be on the outer.

"I'm happy with where we are, and how we're going," he says.

"At this stage of the season we're around the money."

To confirm the Breakers real claim to the title, Lowe points to a recent run of games against other top clubs which have seen the Breakers more than match their counterparts.

"We're not a fancy football team," Lowe insists.

"We play to our strengths.

"We can't afford to be elaborate – we're more an industrious team.

"We work hard."

Lowe has spotted players within the youth ranks



who he rates as real talents, although no-one in David Lowe's team is about to get star-billing or preferential treatment.

"Everyone knows that they have to make their own luck and their own chances in this game. "That's the nature of professional football.

"The stars of the future are usually the hardest workers."

For Lowe, the Breakers youth side is his first full-time assignment as a coach and, whilst he agrees that he is adjusting well to the stress and strains that come with the coaching position, he admits he still feels the frustration that comes from years as a footballer.

"I'd rather be playing," he admits bluntly.

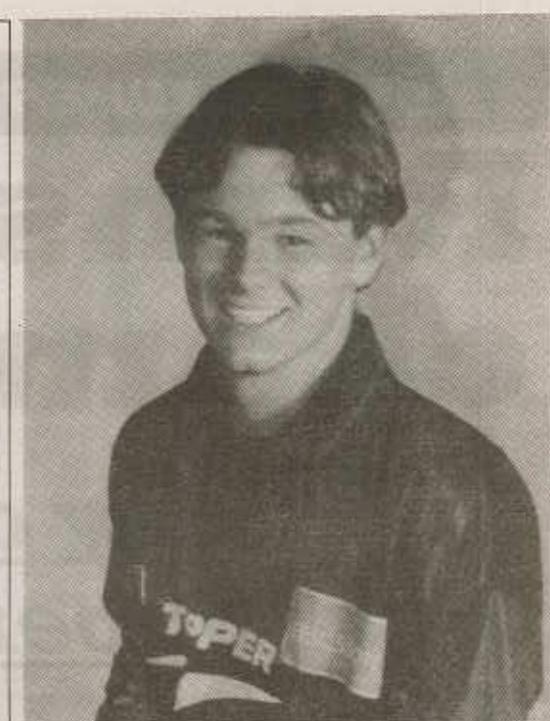
"Unfortunately, the mind is willing but the body isn't able.

"It certainly gets frustrating sometimes.

"You just want to get out on the park and do it yourself.

"But coaching has its own rewards too.

"There is an immense satisfaction which comes with a win."



Swancott training hard

Newcastle's Brad Swancott has been selected in the Australian Young Socceroos Squad for the World Youth Championships.

"I've been playing, training, and working towards this goal for over a year now. I just have to make the cut."

The keeper's form has been solid this year.

He has spent all but one game in the Breakers Youth League side this season.

Swancott is widely regarded in footballing circles for his talent and his maturity. Last year he spent the majority of the season between goals for the Breakers National Soccer League team.



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NATIONAL YOUTH LEAGUE UPDATE

with Roy Hay

National Youth League
(Southern Division)
13-14 February 1999

VIS v Knights

THE Victorian Institute of Sport came from behind to beat the Melbourne Knights by three goals to two in an entertaining match played in extreme heat at Knights Stadium.

Chris Tabak finished off good work by Serdar Bol in the fifth minute to give the Knights an excellent start, but ten minutes later Scott McDonald fired in a pile-driver from all of 30 metres which flew over Andrew Belaich and crashed against the bar.

Naum Sekulovski reacted fastest to put the rebound away for the VIS.

Sekulovski had a hand in the VIS's second goal on the hour setting up Angelo Motsopoulos for a neat finish in which he lifted the ball over the diving keeper.

Motsopoulos made it three in 83 minutes running on to a loose ball and rounding Belaich.

The Knights would not give up and Ivica Kolcic curled a free kick around the wall for a fine goal, but the Knights could not

find an equaliser in the few minutes left.

Bulleen v Albury

Ron Carroll of Bulleen reports: The match today resulted in a 6-1 win for Bulleen against Albury Wodonga.

The first goal came at the 28 minute mark from a cross from the left by Phillip Klathas to Xhezair Sulemani in the box.

His first shot was blocked by Sam Chambers but Xhezair pounced on the rebound and put it away.

The next was at 34 minutes when Matthew Culina got round the defence and crossed the ball to Xhezair who was unmarked in the box for an easy goal.

One minute before half time Albury scored in the same manner when Zoran Tudor beat Bulleen's defence and crossed to an unmarked Quinton O'Grady in the 6 yard box.

The third goal for Bulleen was at the 51st minute when Albury's defence gave the ball away under pressure from Mark Stella and Berkan Sakaci collected the ball and slotted it in by the near post.

The next goal was at

the 78 minute mark when Mark Tsiorlas drew two defenders leaving Frank Coniglio clear to receive the pass, Sam came off his line and was neatly chipped for his trouble.

Mark Tsiorlas scored the final two final goals at the 85 and 87 minutes through turnovers on the edge of the box.

South v Falcons

South Melbourne beat Gippsland Falcons by the only goal scored.

George Katsamboukas for the Blues reports: A 84th minute strike by Tas Psonis was enough to break the deadlock in this game. Souths' Erhan Bayraktar missed two golden chances in the first half.

National Youth League
(Northern Division)

12-14 February

Academy v Wolves

In the last of the Round 19 matches played last Monday, ACTAS caused a big surprise with a three-nil win over Wollongong Wolves. Michael Musitano scored twice and A Williams scored the third.

Breakers v Olympic
Newcastle Breakers opened Round 20 on

Friday with a four-one win over Sydney Olympic Academy.

An own goal started the scoring for Newcastle, then Peter Juchniewicz made it two in 35 minutes.

Chris Seitas pulled a goal back for the Academy a minute later.

Josh Maguire's penalty made it three-one for Newcastle in forty minutes, and Tony Madjuravski complete the scoring with Newcastle's fourth two minutes after the break.

NSWIS v Marconi

NSW Institute of Sport beat Marconi Colts by two goals to nil, but it was level pegging till ten minutes to go when Tallan Martin broke through from a pass by Simon Catanzaro.

Nahuel Arrarte made the points secure in 85 minutes.

The Institute has been using some excellent fourteen and fifteen year olds in recent games including Michael Brown, Nick Vagenas and Leighal Dellis.

Marconi's Anthony Mondello caused headaches all day for the NSWIS defence.

Young Stallions go down bravely in Italy

THE Marconi Youth team arrive back in Sydney on Friday night after being eliminated from the prestigious Viareggio tournament the previous day by Croatian club Varteks 2-1.

Marconi led until the final 10 minutes.

The Marconi Youth team were celebrating their first ever advancement to the second round of the competition after finishing second in their group behind the 1998 Champions Bari and faced up to one of the tournaments favoured teams for a place in the quarter finals.

Captain Buddy Farah gave Marconi the lead in the first half and the young Aussies were on top of their more illustrious opponents.

Leading 1-0, Marconi



were awarded a penalty in the second half and Farah again stepped up to take the kick. The chance to double the score was missed and with untimely injuries to Stallions Travis Dodd and Danny Invincible, the Croatian team was handed a lifeline to salvage the match.

Greater experience shone through, and the depleted Marconi team succumbed to two goals, in the final stages of the match to bravely bow out of the tournament.

A tremendous amount

QAS v United

Queensland Academy of Sport had a good three-nil away win over Sydney United Colts.

Chay Hews, Shane Smeltz and Allan Cameron scored the goals.

AIS v Spirit

The Australian Institute of Sport beat Northern Spirit two-nil at Cromer Park with goals by Elias Dimourtzidis and Ivan Ergic.

Wolves v Spirit

Wollongong Wolves Colts and Northern Spirit Colts drew two-all in a tightly contested match, which set some sort of record with fifteen yellow cards, but both sides report that it was not a dirty game.

Igor Cankulovski and Steve Markovski scored for Wolves and Ian Chruch and Matthew Roberts for Spirit.

Olympic lost concentration later and United came back with goals by Daniel Kukucka and Joe Caleta, but Olympic hung on to keep second spot on the ladder.

Stadium match launched

By Ted Simmons

WORLD Cup winning coach Aime Jacquet has been appointed to handle the FIFA All Stars against the Socceroos at the official opening of the Homebush Olympic Stadium.

Jacquet, who coached France to win last year's World Cup final against Brazil, is expected to announce his first squad by the end of this month and the final squad in April for the match on June 12.

Soccer Australia chairman Basil Scarsella said the appointment indicated the seriousness of FIFA regarding the match.

"At least 28 other sports have put up their hand to be involved in the official opening of the stadium and we're delighted to have this honour," Scarsella said.

"Olyroo coach Raul Blanco is our caretaker national coach and he will be in charge of the team with Youth coach Les Scheinflug and we plan to use the occasion to involve some of the younger coaches."

"This match will give us a great opportunity to wipe out the memory of



Bosnich: will be keep goals for Australia?

that fateful night in Melbourne nearly 18 months ago when Iran eliminated us from the World Cup.

"It will also be the start of Australia's campaign to qualify for the 2002 World Cup finals."

The NSW Minister for the Olympic Games, Michael Knight, said at a special function at the Stadium that he applauded the decision to headline the bill for the official opening of Stadium Australia with a programme involving an official

He said the timing meant that the European season would be finished and approaches have already been made to stars such as Ronaldo, Michael Owen, Zinedene Zidane and Christian Vieri as well as Australians Mark Bosnich, Harry Kewell and Mark Viduka.

It will be the first Olympic sport to be staged at the Stadium and officials hope to fill the 110,000 capacity ground with a programme involving an official

opening ceremony, entertainment and the world match.

Leeds attacker Kewell has led a chorus of overseas-based Australian players to sing the praises of opening the stadium with an international soccer match.

"The atmosphere at the MCG when we played Iran in front of 85,000 people is something that still sticks in my memory but this might even top that," he said.

"By playing the game in June, it's going to make it easier for everyone to get back and it will be a wonderful chance for Australian soccer and the Socceroos to show what we can do."

Scarsella said that soccer was the most watched Olympic sport and he intended to continue that record during Sydney 2000.

"Soccer was not played at Atlanta during the 1996 Games but Sydney will get both an opening game and the final," he said.

"We are expecting our best players to be available and all indications show that they are jumping out of their skin to be involved."

Canberra book Grand Final place

CANBERRA secured first place and a spot in the women's soccer national summer grand final with a revenge 1-0 victory over NSW on Sunday.

The pressure was on Canberra to win or risk missing out on the final after losing 2-0 to NSW on Saturday and also losing key players Peita-Clair Hepperlin and Sasha Wainwright through suspension.

NSW and South Australia will fight for the remaining grand final spot in next week's last round.

Canberra scored in the 13th minute with Amy Killpatrick finding the back of the net from 13 metres to finish off a fine passing combination.

Queensland continued their goalscorer wave and dominated to record a solid 5-2 victory over Northern NSW. Northern fought back to equalise at 2-2 but Queensland shrugged off the challenge to score another three goals in

the final 15 minutes.

And on Saturday New South Wales Sapphires looked like boosting their chances for a place in the grand final with a strong 2-0 win over leader Canberra Eclipse.

Defending champion NSW proved tougher in Saturday's fiery clash taking the lead just before the break with a clinical finish by Michelle Parney after good work from Kelly Golebiowski.

Anissa Tann-Darby sealed the win from the penalty spot midway through the second half after Canberra's Hepperlin was sent off for a foul on Golebiowski in the penalty box.

In the other Saturday fixture, TAS Sting dominated over last placed Northern NSW Horizon in Southport, running away with a 5-0 win.

April Mann opened Queensland account with Tammie Thornton and Lisa Dunn each scoring a double.

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Buljan follow-up continues Cosmos revival

By Graham Cooke

CANBERRA Cosmos coach Tom Sermanni praised the grit and determination of his team as it battled to only its second NSL win of the season with a 1-0 score over Wollongong Wolves last Monday in a delayed Round 19 fixture.

Admitting the Cosmos had been second best for most of the game, Sermanni nevertheless heaped praise on individual players, none more so than giant goalkeeper Vilson Knezevic.

"In the last few games Vilson has been outstanding, and when Wol-

longong got through our defence tonight, he pulled off some great saves," Sermanni said. "His confidence has just grown, game by game."

With eight minutes gone in the match Ivo De Jesus, penetrating the walled penalty area with a powerful run, was dragged back by Damon Langan, and referee Jeff Tippett awarded the penalty.

The Cosmos leading scorer, Peter Buljan was far too casual with the spot kick and goalkeeper Leslie Pogliacomi, diving to his left, parried the shot.

Luckily for Buljan the

ball rebounded to him and he was able to push it back past the prostrate goalkeeper.

Wollongong spent most of the remainder of the half searching for an equaliser and was unlucky not to find one.

The closest it came was a low cross from Chad Bishop which sped across the face of goal, missing strikers and defenders alike.

Against the run of play Cosmos almost went 2-0 up - Leo Langone's drive bringing a spectacular save from Pogliacomi.

The second half was almost entirely dominated by the Wolves but



Peter Buljan: scored at the second attempt to give his club its second win of the season

CANBERRA COSMOS 1 (Buljan)
WOLLONGONG CITY WOLVES 0
Venue: Bruce Stadium
Man of the Match: Vilson Knezevic CANB

poor finishing and a resolute defence kept the visiting team at bay.

For the Cosmos it

marked a period under Sermanni's control in which they had gained

eight points from a possi-

ble fifteen – and including only one defeat.

However, for Wollongong the loss signalled

the end of any realistic chances they had of making this season's Top Six play-offs.

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Care puts lack lustre Marconi in front

A jet-lagged Christian Care helped rescue Marconi-Fairfield's national soccer league season by scoring the opening goal in their 2-1 win over Canberra Cosmos at Marconi Stadium on Saturday.

Care, 20, had returned from playing in the prestigious Viareggio Youth Tournament in Italy only 24 hours earlier but still found the energy to spearhead Marconi's win.

In the 7th minute, the Young Socceroo and Olyroo received a short corner kick from Vlado Zoric, flicked the ball in the air and volleyed past

Canberra goalkeeper Vilson Knezevic.

Marconi went further ahead 13 minutes after the break from a harmless cross by left back Brendan Renaud.

Poor communication between Knezevic and two defenders saw the ball slip through the three of them and into the path of unmarked Kris Trajanovski at the far post who poked home his 50th NSL goal.

Marconi seemed to be enjoying a comfortable lead when Canberra struck back with 14 minutes to go.

A back pass by Care

wide of the goal saw Marconi goalkeeper Ante Covic clear the ball straight to Canberra substitute Ivo De Jesus who shot into an empty goal.

Canberra could have snatched an unlikely draw three minutes later when another shot at goal by De Jesus hit the post.

Trajanovski almost scored a deserved second goal when a lob over the Canberra defence hit the cross bar.

Nobody was more relieved with the result than Marconi coach Frank Farina who was under enormous pressure to win for the first time

since the December 27 defeat of the Melbourne Knights.

"It's been a difficult time," Farina said.

"I was especially happy with Brendan Renaud who has been out injured for 12 weeks."

"Ante Covic made a schoolboy error but apart from that he went alright."

Canberra Cosmos coach Tom Sermanni said Marconi deserved to win.

"Marconi had the majority of the game and we were satisfied to lose by only one goal," he said.

"My team was still a little bit tired from Monday's win over Wollongong.

"It is hard for a part time team to back up two games in such a short

space of time.

"But there was always the fear that we would cop a thumping tonight.

"That didn't happen and we have come away with a lot of respect even though there are no points with that."

Instrumental in the unpredicted low score was the form of Canberra goalkeeper Vilson Knezevic, who was outstanding, and veteran defender Gordon Hunter.

The former Hibernian

star was inspirational, particularly in the second half when the Cosmos grew with confidence as he kept both Francis Awaritefe and Kris Trajanovski under wraps.

And when a wag from the crowd yelled good natured banter at Hunter for denying Marconi three goal scoring attempts in the second half he put up four fingers.

Marconi still have a lot to do if they are to be a serious contender for the

finals and coach Farina will not be fooled by this result.

In truth, Marconi were seldom in trouble in a game which Canberra never looked capable of winning but which Marconi never looked like they wanted to win.

Problems in the Stalions midfield still abound and the lack of a clear ball winner will prevent them from challenging for this season's title.



Gordon Hunter: the new Cosmos captain was inspirational

ERICSSON CUP SOCCER



Ericsson Cup Round 21: 20-22 February

Saturday 20 February

Melbourne Knights v Northern Spirit
Knights Stadium 8.00pm

Sunday 21 February

Adelaide City v Wollongong Wolves
Hindmarsh Stadium 8.00pm

Carlton v Brisbane Strikers
Optus Oval 5.00pm

South Melbourne v Marconi Fairfield
Bob Jane Stadium 6.00pm

Gippsland Falcons v Newcastle Breakers
Mobil Park 7.00pm

Sydney United v Perth Glory ****
Edensor Park 5.00pm

Monday 22 February

Canberra Cosmos v Sydney Olympic
Bruce Stadium 7.30pm

Bye: Adelaide Sharks

*** denotes ABC Match of the Round

NOTE: all information believed correct at time of going to press. Please check with daily press, your club or Soccer Australia for changes to scheduled kick offs.
ASF (02) 9380 6099, Adelaide City (08) 8336 9077, Adelaide Sharks (08) 8351 9866, Brisbane Strikers (07) 3252 5327, Carlton (03) 9389 6213, Canberra Cosmos (02) 6281 7981, Gippsland Falcons (03) 5134 5529, Marconi Fairfield (02) 9823 2222, Melbourne Knights (03) 9699 4188, Newcastle Breakers (02) 4951 2722, Northern Spirit (02) 9460 2187, Perth Glory (08) 9383 9911, South Melbourne (03) 9645 9797, Sydney Olympic (02) 9558 5355, Sydney United (02) 9823 6418, Wollongong City (02) 4226 3988

Ten man Olympic hold on for vital derby win

By Anthony Raineri

SYDNEY Olympic survived a second-half red card to defeat Sydney United 2-1 on Sunday in a national soccer league derby at Belmore Sports Ground.

Olympic's former Greek first division player Chris Kalantzis was sent off 14 minutes after the break having scored his team's opening goal in the first half.

United were unable to secure the equaliser and as early as the fifth minute missed what in hindsight was a crucial scoring opportunity.

Walter Ardone threaded a perfect through ball to Steve Berry whose shot with the outside of his right foot went past the keeper

but rolled just wide of the post.

Olympic opened the scoring in the 24th minute after a dreadful mistake by United's defence.

United defender Joe Vrkic gave a weak back-pass to veteran keeper Mike Gibson who was dispossessed by Olympic midfielder Brett Emerton.

The Olyroo captain drew Gibson wide and calmly crossed to teammate Kalantzis who shot into an empty goal.

Pablo Cardozo extended the lead two minutes before the break with his 17th goal of the

season and 29th strike in his past 32 NSL games.

The NSL's leading scorer received a cross from the left, turned inside his marker Vrkic and fired an unstoppable shot at goal.

Scorer Kalantzis turned villain nine minutes after half-time when he was sent off for clipping the face of United's Velimir Kupresak in a challenge.

Olympic officials were outraged with the decision because early in the game United's Ardone received only a yellow card for what appeared to be an elbow to the face of

Olympic's Jason Culina.

United player coach David Mitchell said Olympic deserved to win.

"We made it difficult for ourselves by playing poorly," he said.

"Our midfielders were not running with the ball enough and we were a bit floppy in defence."

Olympic coach Branko Culina said his team showed tremendous character to hold out for the win.

"We played great football in the first half and we showed great character in the second half," said Culina.

SYDNEY OLYMPIC 2 (Kalantzis, Cardozo)
SYDNEY UNITED 1 (Sterjovski)
Venue: Belmore Sports Ground
Man of the Match: Pablo Cardozo SOLY

"The whole team was that kind of character and superb. If we can show attitude week in week out, we will win many more games."

Coach Culina: a happy man after Sydney derby win



Arnold's half time header inspires

By Ted Simmons

VETERANS Graham Arnold and Robbie Slater resurrected their glory days with a brace of goals which led Northern Spirit to a much-needed 3-1 win over Carlton at North Sydney Oval on Sunday afternoon.

The victory kept the Spirit in the Top Six of the Ericsson Cup on track for the play-offs in their inaugural year.

Arnold chose the right moment to change his on-field team when he replaced Gabriel Mendez with Clayton Zane five minutes before half time.

Carlton had dominated most of the opening half and took the lead when Lubo Lapsansky ran through the defence and swept a 25 metre drive past sprawling keeper Paul Henderson.

But the elusive Matt Langdon found space on the right 20 seconds before half time and his pin point cross was headed home by an athletic leap from Arnold to tie the score.

"It was a very important goal. If we'd gone in at the break trailing and with our heads down it would have

NORTHERN SPIRIT 3 (Arnold, Slater, Marusic)

CARLTON 1 (Lapsansky)

Venue: North Sydney Oval

Man of the Match: Lubo Lapsansky CARL

been really hard," Arnold said.

Spirit came out in more determined fashion after the break and the aggressive Zane quickly forced a change in the Carlton tactics.

He roamed along the right in the 59th minute, challenged the defence and slipped the ball to Kresimir Marusic whose square pass across the goal was netted by Slater.

It was Slater's fifth goal of the season and its importance was evident from the renewed vigour which flowed into his team-mates.

Six minutes later, Zane was again in action, crossing to Slater in the penalty area who pushed the ball back for Marusic to put Spirit 3-1 ahead.

The two goals took the sting out of Carlton who began to chase the ball and lost possession as the Sydney team took control.

Keeper Henderson brought off a number of point blank saves, particularly from Carlton new signing Archie Thompson who was always a

danger when within scoring range.

"Our first 40 minutes were not good because of the heat and the tight marking and Zane, who trained so well during the week, showed the fans what he could do," said Arnold.

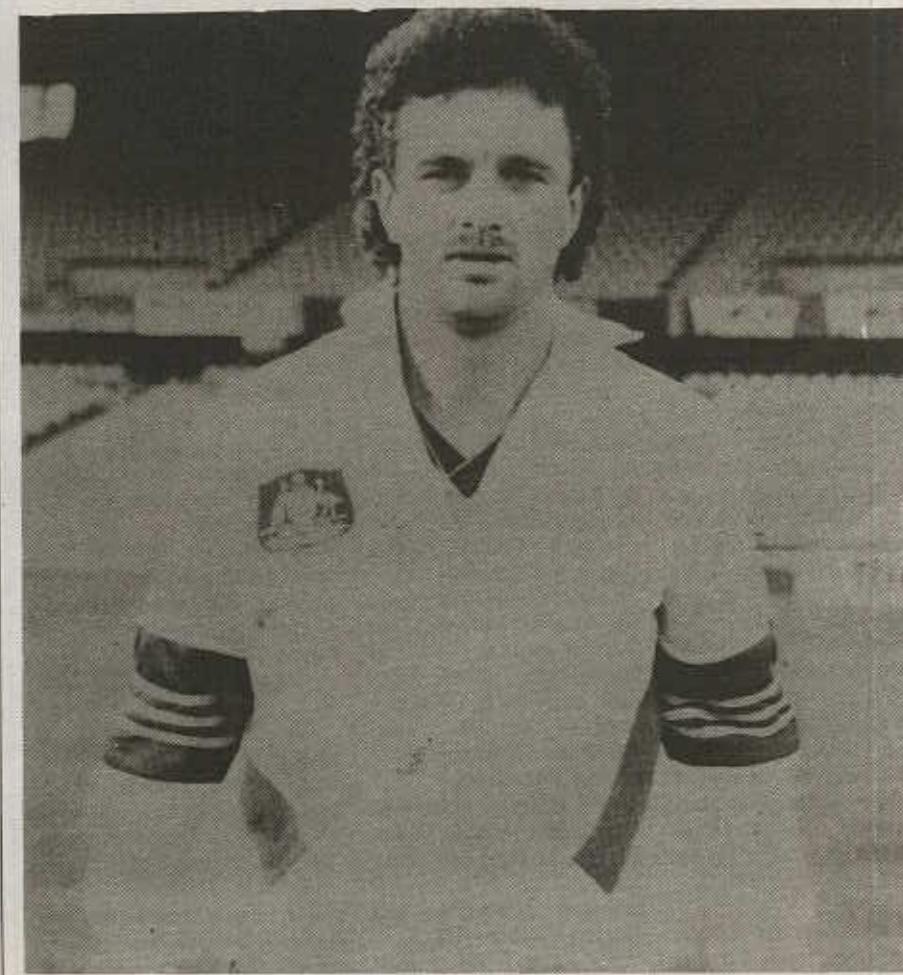
"But I'd like to question the change in fixtures to today."

"We've lost \$40,000 because we drew just over 8,000 spectators when we can draw up to 18,000 on a Friday night."

"As the game was switched to suit television programming, I think the television channel should subsidise what we lost."

Carlton coach Eddie Krncevic said finishing remained a problem for his team and Arnold's goal just before half time was a blow.

"We have three or four players not good enough at this level and it's time to start bleeding younger players and to look forward to next season," he said.



Graham Arnold: scored a timely goal on the stroke of half time

Knights exploit City weakness

By Alan Clark

MELBOURNE Knights' long-suffering fans were able to rekindle memories of their glory years with a comprehensive 3-1 win over championship contenders Adelaide City, even though the win didn't move Knights from their position second bottom in the league.

The win was Knights' first since a narrow 1-0 win away at fellow strugglers Gippsland Falcons in early December last year, and their first at home since their late November 2-0 triumph over perennial cellar-dwellers Canberra Cosmos.

But it was forwards, not backwards, Knights new coach Josip Biskic was looking: "They showed their character."

"We outplayed (Adelaide City) in the second half."

"I'm so happy, the guys deserved the win."

"I told them before the game 'Only you can change the situation here, nobody else' and that's what they did."

It all looked as if it would

MELBOURNE KNIGHTS 3 (Baini, Kelic, Podeljak)
ADELAIDE CITY 1 (Terminello)
Venue: Knights Stadium
Man of the Match: Alex Kiratzoglou MELK

end in tears however as Adelaide City had commenced in barn-storming fashion - Damian Mori as expected causing the greatest havoc.

Ransford Banini had begun at right back, but was soon shifted to stay close to City's sharpshooter.

After 21 minutes what had seemed inevitable finally transpired.

Making great strides into space down the right, City midfielder David Terminello ran onto a cleverly played ball which split the Knights' covering attempts.

Terminello ran, letting loose a ball to the near post to where Mori had run, closely marked by Banini.

Knights' keeper Joe Didulica joined the convergence, wary of Mori's potential to deflect the arriving ball.

There was no touch, and this was sufficient to flummox

Banini's and Didulica's anticipation of Mori's intervention. Terminello's cross had transmuted into a shot, becoming the opening goal.

Followers of Adelaide City's style would then be prepared for City to rest with that advantage, defending in deep and relying on the usually unquestioned mastery of experienced Socceroos Milan Ivanovic and Alex Tobin, frustrating the opponents into leaving space for Mori's pace to exploit.

But Knights declined to fall into this trap - harassing Ivanovic and Tobin at every opportunity and denying them time on the ball to probe for the opening.

Ante Kovacevic had taken the field by this stage after starting his 100th game on the bench, and his interdiction was to prove crucial.

The equaliser came on 27

minutes and after a goalmouth scramble following a corner.

Alex Kiratzoglou had managed to start the action with a shot from just outside the six yard box, the ball was blocked, eventually running loose for Banini to sidefoot home.

Just before the hour, Kovacevic had a long-range effort which Jason Petkovic managed to touch over for a corner.

Tobin came to City's rescue with a header from under the crossbar as the corner was swept in.

The pressure began to tell on the visitors, and Knights seemed to draw strength despite the energy-sapping conditions.

Just two minutes later, Kiratzoglou went on a weaving run before supplying Ice Kullesovski who shot narrowly wide from distance with

By Sam Lienert

A hard-working game from Gippsland Falcons defender Will Hastie helped his side come away with a scoreless draw in an uninspiring national soccer match against fellow struggler Adelaide Sharks at Hindmarsh Stadium.

Gippsland, which has scored only 12 goals in 18 matches this season, the least of any side in the league, clearly had no great desire to add to that record.

Falcons coach Stuart Munro stacked the defence heavily and his players rarely ventured forward, making only two shots on goal in the match, with both well off target and gaining only one corner kick.

The Sharks, in contrast, consistently entered their attacking zone and had plenty of good scoring chances but failed to break through the Gippsland defence.

Hastie was well assisted by fellow defenders Marko Perinovic, Michael Anderson and Levent Osman in stifling the attacks.

Adelaide striker Derek Pomer continued his good form and created his side's best chances with some skilful weaving past defenders but had little help from teammates.

Fellow forward Hamilton Thorp was obviously not at full fitness and was taken from the pitch by coach Adrian Santrac 30 minutes into the match after having no impact.

The draw was Adelaide's eighth straight match without a win - the slump now the longest winless stretch in one season in the club's history.

Petkovic well beaten.

Knights took the lead in the 67th minute.

Their constant pressure deserved the goal even though it came in fortuitous circumstances from which the experienced Ivan Kelic capitalised with deadly effect.

Knights were awarded a free-kick 26 metres out.

Michael Reda's shot hit the wall, dropping neatly for Kelic on the 18 yard line.

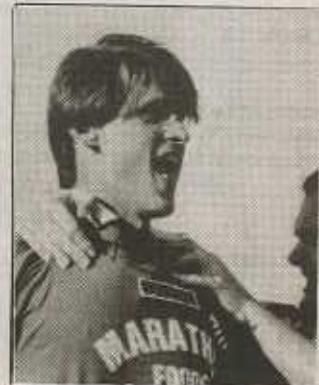
Kelic still had work to do to turn and find the target, but he did so with the calmness of the ton-up striker he is.

If Knights' two earlier goals were fashioned from meagre scraps, the third and final was extravagant and skilled.

Tom Podeljak ran from the half-way line making ground as he watched the City defence back off.

Finally, Ivanovic was compelled to tackle at the edge of the penalty-area, but watched as the ball was whipped out of range with a clever Podeljak sidestep.

Now in front of the full face of the goal, Podeljak's shot



Ivan Kelic

whistled in.

"The first twenty minutes we looked like we wanted to win the game, and then we stuffed it up," said bemused City coach Zoran Matic after the game.

Matic made no excuses for the playing conditions - most of the match was played in temperatures in the high 30s - "This team is not fit mentally, but physically they're OK," he said.

"I know what happened, and I will fix it," he added ominously.

Rampant Perth slaughter Strikers

PERTH Glory rediscovered its early season form with a stunning 6-0 win over the Brisbane Strikers at Perth Oval on Sunday.

The clash between the fourth and eighth-placed teams in the national soccer league was difficult from the outset but Perth quickly established a 2-0 half time lead and striker Bobby Despotovski killed the match with three second half goals within 14 minutes.

Glory took the same line-up into this game as that which beat Adelaide last week and the confidence from that win flowed into this game with the Strikers paying the penalty.

The Strikers Des Hughes was yellow-carded 21 minutes into the first half and the team was forced to play with 10 men when captain Glenn

Gwynne was sent off.

Glory started its scoring rampage in the 24th minute when Con Boutsianis placed the ball in front of a running Vas Kalogeracos who scored his third goal for the season.

Within three minutes Glory had scored its second goal when Brisbane's Steve Laybutt had the ball taken out of his possession by Kalogeracos who found Alistair Edwards playing in just his second game for the Perth side.

Edwards switched his pass to Scott Miller who slotted the ball home.

It wasn't long in the second half before Perth took a stranglehold on the game with Despotovski stealing the show.

The striker became only the second player in Glory's history to score a hattrick.

The first came 17 minutes into the second half when Brisbane keeper Clint Bolton couldn't control a shot on goal from Edwards and Despotovski hit the rebounding ball into goal.

Glory's next score came from a mistake by Brisbane's Kasey Wehrman who headed the ball in the wrong direction and into the path of Despotovski for his second.

Two minutes later he scored his third when Gareth Naven slammed a shot into Brisbane's keeper who again failed to control the ball and Despotovski was on the spot to convert.

Brisbane couldn't stop Glory's onslaught and substitute Gianfranco Circati scored his team's sixth and final goal.

HASTIE KEEPS SHARKS BLANK

ADELAIDE SHARKS 0
GIPPSLAND FALCONS 0
Venue: Hindmarsh Stadium
Man of the Match: Willie Hastie GIPS

LIVE SOCCER ON ABC MATCH OF THE ROUND

Sydney United

V

Perth Glory

SUNDAY 21

FEBRUARY

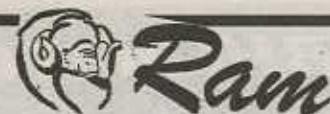
5.00pm

ABC

PERTH GLORY 6 (Despotovski 3, Kalogeracos, Miller, Circati)
BRISBANE STRIKERS 0
Venue: Perth Oval
Man of the Match: Bobby Despotovski PRTH

SCOREBOARD

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RAM SPORTS

NSW SUPER LEAGUE

SUPER LEAGUE: First Grade, Round 2

Saturday February 13
 Macarthur Rams 3 Blacktown City 2
 Own goal 12 J Angelucci 41
 K Rastall 39 D Foxe 43
 R Lloyd 75

Sutherland Sharks 1 Central Coast 2
 L Stephens 6 N Byrn 7
 P Presta 33

Sunday 14 February
 Bankstown City Lions 1 Canterbury Marrickville 5
 M Todorovski 20 N Bosevski 53, 85
 J Talcevski 64, 70
 Z Ilic 77

Parramatta Eagles Ryde City (LKO)

Eastern Suburbs 1 Leichhardt Tigers 2
 S McCombe 34 C Bedzicaric 12
 S Boudaher 87

Fairfield Bulls Bonnyrigg White Eagles

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Macarthur Rams	2	2	0	0	7	3	6
Canterbury Marrickville	2	1	1	0	6	2	4
Leichhardt Tigers	2	1	1	0	2	1	4
Fairfield Bulls	1	1	0	0	3	1	3
Blacktown City	2	1	0	1	4	3	3
Bankstown City Lions	2	1	0	1	6	7	3
Central Coast	2	1	0	1	3	5	3
Parramatta Eagles	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
Sutherland Sharks	2	0	1	1	2	3	1
Ryde City	1	0	0	1	1	3	0
Bonnyrigg	1	0	0	1	2	5	0
Eastern Suburbs	2	0	0	2	1	4	0
Central Coast	1	0	0	1	1	4	0

SUPER LEAGUE: Under 21, Round 2

Saturday February 13
 Macarthur Rams 4 Blacktown City 1

Sutherland Sharks 1 Central Coast 2

Sunday 14 February
 Bankstown City Lions 0 Canterbury Marrickville 2
 Parramatta Eagles 2 Ryde City 1
 Eastern Suburbs 2 Leichhardt Tigers 1
 Fairfield Bulls 0 Bonnyrigg White Eagles 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Bonnyrigg	2	2	0	0	5	0	6
Macarthur Rams	2	2	0	0	5	1	6
Parramatta Eagles	2	1	1	0	5	4	4
Canterbury Marrickville	2	1	0	1	2	1	3
Fairfield Bulls	2	1	0	1	2	2	3
Sutherland Sharks	2	1	0	1	2	2	3
Central Coast	2	1	0	1	2	2	3
Blacktown City	2	1	0	1	3	4	3
Eastern Suburbs	2	1	0	1	2	3	3
Leichhardt Tigers	2	0	1	1	4	5	1
Ryde City	2	0	0	2	2	4	0
Bankstown City Lions	2	0	0	2	0	6	3

SUPER LEAGUE: Under 18, Round 2

Saturday February 13
 Macarthur Rams 3 Blacktown City 0
 Sutherland Sharks 2 Central Coast 1

Sunday 14 February

Bankstown City Lions 2 Canterbury Marrickville 4
 Parramatta Eagles 2 Ryde City 0
 Eastern Suburbs 1 Leichhardt Tigers 2
 Fairfield Bulls 1 Bonnyrigg White Eagles 3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Canterbury Marrickville	2	2	0	0	8	3	6
Leichhardt Tigers	2	2	0	0	3	1	6
Bankstown City Lions	2	1	0	1	6	5	3

Inside Soccer's TRIVIA MOMENTS Sponsored by SOCCERLINE

- NAC Breda
- Bobby Bignall of Corinal Rangers
- John Kosmina for West Adelaide v Canberra City

ERICSSON CUP 1998/99

	home				away				Pts		
	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	Pts
1 South Melbourne	19	8	1	0	21	8	4	3	3	16	13
2 Sydney United	19	7	2	1	20	7	4	1	5	12	15
3 Perth Glory	19	6	1	3	21	9	4	2	3	18	12
4 Adelaide City	19	7	2	1	21	5	3	1	5	10	11
5 Northern Spirit	19	6	2	2	14	7	4	0	5	10	17
6 Sydney Olympic	19	8	1	1	24	8	1	3	5	9	17
7 Carlton	19	6	2	1	23	7	2	2	6	12	20
8 Brisbane Strikers	18	5	3	2	18	12	3	1	4	9	14
9 Marconi Fairfield	18	5	1	2	19	12	3	2	5	12	22
10 Newcastle Breakers	19	4	3	3	12	11	1	2	6	6	15
11 Wollongong City	17	3	4	2	17	11	2	1	5	8	19
12 Adelaide Sharks	19	4	4	2	19	13	2	1	6	8	18
13 Gippsland Falcons	18	3	2	4	6	12	1	3	5	6	19
14 Melbourne Knights	18	2	2	5	11	13	2	2	5	9	17
15 Canberra Cosmos	18	1	0	8	7	18	0	2	7	6	18

NATIONAL YOUTH LEAGUE

Northern Division	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
AIS	18	12	5	1	71	12	41
Sydney Olympic	18	12	2	4	48	20	38
Northern Spirit	18	11	2	5	32	17	35
Newcastle Breakers	18	11	4	3	38	18	37
Marconi Fairfield	15	9	5	1	46	12	32
QAS	17	11	1	5	50	21	34
Wollongong Wolves	16	10	1	5	34	16	31
NSWIS	16	10	3	3	39	12	33
Sydney United	18	7	4	7	33	27	25
Marconi Fairfield Colts	18	5	3	10	16	30	18
ACTAS	18	4	2	12	26	44	14
Sydney United Colts	17	4	0	13	18	51	12
Northern Spirit Colts	17	2	3	12	16	72	9
Sydney Olympic Academy	18	1	3	14	13	59	6
Wollongong Wolves Colts	18	1	2	15	10	79	5

Southern Division	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
South Melbourne	16	10	3	3	29	15	33
Carlton	14	9	2	3	41	16	29
VIS	14	8	3	3	28	21	27
Gippsland Falcons	15	6	2	7	23	24	20
Melbourne Knights	15	5	3	7	26	29	18
Bulleen Inter Kings	14	5	2	7	19	24	17
Albury Wodonga	14	0	1	13	14	51	1

VICTORIAN STATE

VICTORIAN PREMIER LEAGUE: Round 2

Monday 8 February
 Westvale 3 Bulleen Inter Kings 3
 A Goutzioulis D Gnjidic 2
 Nuniez
 Stubbins

VICTORIAN PREMIER LEAGUE: Round 3

Saturday 13/ Sunday 14 February
 Fawkner Blues 2 Green Gully 3
 Bentleigh Greens 1 Melbourne Raiders 1
 Altona East 0 St Albans Saints 2
 Preston Lions 3 Altona Magic 0
 Port Melbourne Sharks 2 Sunshine Georg

FEEL THE POWER NOVELL CANBERRA COSMOS

v

SYDNEY OLYMPIC

Bruce Stadium

Monday 22 February

KICK OFF 7.30pm



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